



FACULTEIT LETTEREN EN WIJSBEGEERTE
VAKGROEP ENGELSE LITERATUUR
ACADEMIEJAAR 2007–2008

EZRA POUND: THE RISE AND FALL OF THE LONDON VORTEX

FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF
PIERRE BOURDIEU'S FIELD OF CULTURAL PRODUCTION

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SCRIPTIE INGEDIEND TOT HET BEHALEN VAN DE GRAAD VAN
MASTER IN DE TAAL-EN LETTERKUNDE: ENGELS

*I would like to thank Prof. Dr. M. Demoor for her dedication,
her support, and for believing in me.*

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1 Introduction

*“Modern civilization has bred a race with brains like those of rabbits and we who are the heirs of the witch-doctor and the voodoo. We artists who have been so long the despised are about to take over control.
(“The New Sculpture” 68)*

1.1 Ezra Loomis Pound: Background

In 1908 a promising American poet arrived in Venice. His name was Ezra Pound, he was born in Idaho in 1885, and he was a long way from home. He grew up in Pennsylvania, and with a grandfather who was a Republican Congressman, and a father an assistant assayer, the Pounds had little financial worries. As a child he attended Quaker schools, but his actual training began when he entered the private Military Academy at the age of twelve. He played tennis and chess, and fell in love with the *Odyssey* (Moody 8). The summer of 1898 would be a milestone in the aspiring poet’s life, when his aunt took him on a three-month grand tour through Europe. Thirteen-year-old Ezra returned home with a significant broadened view of the world. He must have been infatuated by cities like Paris, London, Zurich, Rome, and especially Venice, since he went on another three-month tour with his family in 1902. In his essay “How I Began,” published in 1913, Ezra Pound wrote:

I knew at fifteen pretty much what I wanted to do. I believed that the ‘impulse’ is with the gods; that technique is a man’s own responsibility. I resolved that at thirty that I would know more about poetry than any man living. (*T.P.’s Weekly* 6 Jun. 1913)

Pound had become “possessed, at the age of 15, by the motive idea of his entire mature life: to be a good, even a flawless artist in words” (Moody 13).

1.2 Research Question and Aim

The aim of the present research is to find out how Pound entered the field of literary production in London, how both his persona and his writings were esteemed, and what strategies he followed in his attempt to become this “flawless artist”. I will focus on several struggles he encountered between his arrival in London in 1908 and his departure in 1920. One of these scrambles was his balancing between the importance of “reputation-mongering” (Ruthven 41) in the literary field and the significance of literariness according to Roman Jakobson’s denotation. Another of his conflicts was his constant equilibrating between the principles of economic and

symbolic capital. I will demonstrate that while he was more focused on the former in his early London years, he would turn to the latter in his second period in London. I will also indicate what specific event caused such a change in the poet's orientation in the field of literary production.

First I will discuss how Pound became a legitimate player in the field, the importance of certain "agents of consecration" (Bourdieu 121) for his career, and how Pound attempted to become a financially independent writer. Second I will demonstrate in chapter 2.2 what initiated the poet's second period in London, between 1912 and 1920, and led to the birth of the Imagist School. Thirdly, in chapter 3, I will discuss the rise of the Vorticist movement on the eve of World War One, and how come it was so short-lived. I will conclude my discussion in chapter 4 focusing on the last death spasms of the Vorticist movement. In the end, Pound desperately tried to save a sinking ship, which greatly affected his career in London and eventually ended it. The leitmotif in this dissertation will be Pound's altruism, and his ways of combining his personal aspirations with the assistance and promotion of fellow artists.

1.3 Theoretical Embedding and Approach

In order to demonstrate how Pound entered the field of literary production in London, I will use the framework Pierre Bourdieu provides in his book *The Field of Cultural Production*. Bourdieu mentions several criteria which have to be fulfilled in order to enter a certain field. The key notion is that one must invest one's capital "in such a way as to derive maximum benefit or 'profit' from participation" (Johnson 8). Bourdieu emphasizes the importance of certain strategies and trajectories to be followed to enter a field. He points out that the merit of a work of art is not first and foremost the criterion by which an artist is accepted as a legitimate player. Bourdieu mentions three "competing principles of legitimacy," which are usually mutually exclusive, and which can grant authority to an artist attempting to enter a certain field (Bourdieu 50). A second relevant aspect discussed by Bourdieu is the struggle between "two principles of hierarchization: the heteronomous principle" and "the autonomous principle" (Bourdieu 40). I will indicate how Pound followed the first principle during his first four years in London, to switch over to the second principle after 1912.

Bourdieu also indicates the difference between symbolic capital and economic capital, and how the first can be transformed into the latter via certain strategies. The economic principle

often goes hand in hand with the heteronomous principle, and the symbolic with the autonomous. In this regard however, I will demonstrate that Pound often deviated from that paradigm. Last but not least, is the distinction between “the field of restricted cultural production” and “the field of large-scale cultural production” (Bourdieu 115). Although Pound would make several attempts to enter the field of large scale-cultural production, he never really succeeded at leaving the restricted one.

2 Ezra Pound and the Modernist Maneuver

In 1908, at the age of twenty-two, Pound crossed the Atlantic to live the life reserved for him. He had resolutely resolved that poetry was his *métier*, and aspired to turn the center of the literary world into his playground. Six years later the *Philadelphia Press* would print that “Ezra Pound is a young man who went from Wyncote to England and there wrote poems of so much merit that he gained a special place in the highest literary circles” (Stock 82). It was the years preceding the war that can be named Pound’s London heydays. In that brief period the promising poet succeeded in his endeavor to become a respected writer in Europe -- though he was disrespected by many for other reasons --, but it was not first and foremost because of the quality of his poems. Ruthven speaks of a “meritocratic illusion” in this respect, and confirms that “reputation-mongering” was of much bigger importance. “The right contacts could work wonders, and those who controlled the literary pages of the principal journals determined what got reviewed and whether it was received favorable or otherwise” (Ruthven 41). Literary criticism had a much stronger impact than the literariness of a work. Literariness in Roman Jakobson’s denotation are those elements which make literature what it is, namely literature. Those elements form an aspect of the language that can be distinguished from other aspects, the further functions of language Jakobson set out, and because of the focus it lays on itself. Pound understood this better than anyone else, and in the *ABC of Reading* he gave the example of the classic:

A classic is classic not because it conforms to certain structural rules, or fits certain definitions (of which its author had quite probably never heard). It is a classic because of a certain eternal and irrepressible freshness (13).

This was written in the 1930’s, but although Pound already believed the principle and importance of literariness above all other principles in his early London years, it would take some time before he would turn his ideology into practice. Other principles, especially economic ones, had the overhand between 1908 and 1912. Literary criticism dominated and prescribed the value of literary works, and Pound saw no alternative than to cooperate and integrate with the system. Rainey writes that in order “to get hold of the means of production of that discourse -- as a reviewer, *faute de mieux*, but preferably as an editor or publisher -- was a more urgent task.” That was the only way it would be possible for Pound “to create the taste for his own poetry and other writing he approved of” (Ruthven 42).

Pound arrived in Venice in late spring 1908, and one month later, he published his first volume of poems, *A Lume Spento*, there. He soon realized, however, that in order to truly gain literary success, he had to move to the capital of literary activity, London. In September 1908, carrying with him only a few copies of his self-published volume, Pound traveled to London. He wrote to his friend William Carlos Williams that he wanted to “have a month up the Thames somewhere and meet Bill Yeats” (qtd. in Ackroyd 17). At that point Yeats did not even know of Pound’s existence, in fact, having no acquaintances in London at all, it would be difficult to make headway. Symbolism, Impressionism and Post-Impressionism were the flourishing movements at the time, and Pound’s poetry was none of those. As a born entrepreneur, however, Pound scoured the city for publishers. He left some copies of *A Lume Spento* at the bookshop of publisher Elkin Mathews, who liked both Pound and his poems, and agreed to bring out Pound’s next volume of poetry, *Personae*, which would appear in 1909. A hundred copies of *Personae* were printed and sold, but did not yield a single pound. Pound was still dependent on the monthly allowance his father sent him, as he was unable to provide an income for himself between August and January (Moody 71). The years after 1910, however, brought financial progress. His poems were published; he gave readings on literature and wrote for several literary magazines. This Pound had found a fairly easy way of making a modest income.

At the end of 1908 Pound was on the verge of entering the literary field and obtaining a legitimate place within prominent literary circles. To become a part of the world he was dreaming of, however, several hurdles still had to be cleared. In his introduction to Bourdieu’s *The Field of Cultural Production*, Randal Johnson writes that in order to be successful “one must possess the habitus which predisposes one to enter that field, that game, and not another” (8). This means that the individual agent must possess certain practical skills and dispositions which allow the individual to navigate within the field. These actions can and must be altered when necessary, tailored to the fluctuations in the field. Another requirement is that the writer, trying to obtain a position in the literary field, must “possess at least the minimum amount of knowledge, or skill, or ‘talent’ to be accepted as a legitimate player.” Moreover, one must invest one’s capital - “academic, cultural, or symbolic” - in such a way as to gain the “maximum benefit or ‘profit’ from participation” (Johnson 8). Pound’s extensive academic training in literature, especially in the area of Anglo-Saxon, Romance languages and medieval history (including Provençal poetry), complies with those intellectual standards. He had entered U.P.

Penn at the age of fifteen to study comparative values in literature. In 1902-1903 “he took five courses in Latin ... three in History, two in Philosophy ..., and one in Political Science ... -- apart from the compulsory English Composition” (Moody 15). In 1905 he attended Hamilton College and was “admitted to the Latin-Scientific Course,” and graduated at the end of June Bachelor of Philosophy (19). In the fall “he returned to Pennsylvania to do the Masters course in Romance Languages” (27). He studied “Old Provençal, Old French, Early Italian Poets, Dante, Old Spanish, and Spanish Drama” (Moody 29). His thorough study of the classics, Italian and French literature, and especially Provençal poetry would find its way in Pound’s later work. He became a Master of Arts and a Fellow in Romance languages for the University of Pennsylvania in June 1906.

In what follows I will demonstrate how Pound successfully attempted to enter the London literary field, and how he later assisted other artists in doing the same. Initially his academic background was the manual for his enterprise, but from the moment he became an established actor, freedom would be his new guiding principle; freedom of speech, freedom of poetic norms, and at the same time struggling to achieve financial freedom. Between 1909 and 1910 Pound followed the principles Bourdieu describes in his *Field of Cultural Production*, carefully pulling the right strings to achieve his goal. The subsequent year, 1910-1911, would be marked by meeting Margaret Cravens, who would become the poet’s first patron, and meeting Alfred Orage, the editor of the *New Age*, with whom Pound would have a long-standing but troublesome cooperation.

Pound’s influence on modernist writers and his own development as a writer can be divided into two periods. The first period lasted from 1908 until 1912. The last two years of that first period, which is briefly introduced in the previous paragraph, are typified by the years in which Pound attempted to obtain the maximum economical benefit from his writings. This was also the period in which he would establish a reputation and an influential position in the literary field. March 1912 can be seen as a turning point, and the initial impetus of the second and very different period, in which he would focus more on criticism. This alteration was accompanied by an abrupt change of his position in the field, from poet to literary critic. Pound was always sensitive to market conditions both for his own work as for the work of others he tried to publish; his London career -- or maybe his entire life -- was typified by persistent struggle. Since he was a controversial person, who was hated by many, his influence in London would deteriorate

consistently over the years. Unable to break through with the Imagists and Vorticists, financial difficulties, and constant disputes with fellow artists and publishers led Pound to despair. In September 1920 he was fed up with it and wrote to his good friend William Carlos Williams that “there is no longer any intellectual *life* in England save what centers in this eight by ten pentagonal room” (qtd. in Ackroyd 53). One of America’s most talented poets would leave London disillusioned and never return.

2.1 The Early Years: Winning the Hearts and Minds in London

The first bridge was crossed when Mathews published *Personae* in 1909, and introduced Pound to the poet and theorist T.E. Hulme the same year. It was Hulme who brought the young poet into contact with London’s literary circles and acted as Pound’s “agent of consecration,” a role Pound would fulfill for dozens of artists in the following decade. According to Bourdieu’s theory on how to enter a field, “legitimation” is of the highest importance to be successful and is provided by agents who can act authoritatively. As examples of such agents Bourdieu mentions “organizations which are not fully institutionalized: literary circles, critical circles, salons, and small groups surrounding a famous author or associating with a publisher, a review or a literary or artistic magazine” (121). Although Pound’s early aspirations in London were predominantly social ones, these acquaintances were of the utmost significance for his further career. Via Hulme he made contact with “important people like the poet and translator, Laurence Binyon, or the actress, Ellen Terry.” He was also introduced into literary circles and salons such as the Poet’s Club and the Square Club, “two of the more solid literary fraternities of the metropolis” (Ackroyd 19). Moreover, Hulme was the secretary of the Poet’s Club, which met once a month for the “members and their guests to dine together, read their poems, and discuss papers” (Moody 82). It did not take much longer before Pound got befriended with established poets such as Ford Madox Ford and W.B. Yeats, which would result in a breakthrough. Ford was an editor for *The English Review*, probably the most important journal at the time. The editorial assistant for the little magazine, Douglas Goldring, was another key agent to boost Pound’s career. Goldring was befriended with Wyndham Lewis, and would later be a co-founder of the Vorticist group around Lewis that would emerge in 1914.

Pound had then fulfilled all the above mentioned criteria to achieve legitimation, but one; reviews and input in literary magazines. Mathews had published *Personae* and also distributed

copies of *A Quinzaine for This Yule*, which Pound used as a “calling card, to introduce himself as he wanted to be known” (Moody 73). He had been introduced in literary and critical circles, and gave lectures on “The Development of Literature in Southern Europe” (Moody 73). As a result of this progression, important people surrounding established authors entered Pound’s circle of acquaintances. The final endorsement required strong reviews of his writings, and space in a literary magazine. Pound realized this like no one else and knew what to do to create a breakthrough. In a letter to his mother in February 1909, he wrote: “Being in the gang & being known by the right people ought to mean a lot better introduction of ‘Personae’, and more and better reviews. I am not yet a celebrity, but it is indisputable that several very well known people are interested in what I am doing” (Moody 83).

These final requirements to gain a position in the field were met when Pound had one of his sestinas -- “Altaforte” -- published in *The English Review*, and a review of *Personae* published with commercial purposes, in the same issue of June 1909. The review had appeared earlier in the *Daily Telegraph*.

Here is a poet with originality. . . . There is through all a thread of true beauty which gives the work something of a haunting charm. Mr. Pound is of the few who have gone forth into life and found something of a new seed, and his ‘flower’ is one that is unquestionably beautiful. He is much moved by the spirit of the troubadours—to them he turns again and again for theme, and gives us verses instinct with beauty. (*English Review* June, 1909)

The literary field, according to Bourdieu, is a “world of belief”, and it is “the consecrated writer who has the power to consecrate and to win assent when he or she consecrates an author or a work” (42). Yeats and Ford fell in love with the extravagant dandyish young poet. When Pound attended Yeats’s literary evenings, he “laid down the law about poetry” and “distributed Yeats’s cigarettes and Chianti” (qtd. in Ackroyd 21). Pound was a personality, and it is through his self-image building that he was able to move like a hot air balloon in the highest literary circles. Ford described him as follows:

Ezra would approach with the steps of a dancer, making passes with a cane at an imaginary opponent. He would wear trousers made of green billiard cloth, a pink boat, a blue shirt, a tie hand-painted by a Japanese friend, an immense sombrero, a flaming beard cut to a point and a single, large blue ear-ring. (qtd. in Ackroyd 21)

Pound’s poetry may not have been shockingly experimental in that period, his appearance certainly was. On top of that, his attitude and personality was highly unusual and clashed with the London high society. He spoke with a Philadelphia accent and read his “lyric poems rather

loudly,” which was not conform to the rule against “animation.” “He did not practice the ‘soothing personal effacement’ which was all” the London society asked of “a man not in a position to give dinners or financial tips” (Moody 70). Luckily for the young poet, however, he was supported by people with a certain authority, who often vented their thoughts even more loudly. Together with Wyndham Lewis, whom Pound met in 1909, and T.E. Hulme, Ford Madox Ford was the driving force behind Pound’s literary spirit. Those three men must have encouraged Pound to strive for poetic change, a concept that would mark the poet’s entire further career. Although Pound was surrounded by Edwardians, and it was very tempting to become one himself, he turned to Ford, Lewis and Hulme, who challenged the literary conventions of the time. In an interview towards the end of his life Pound stressed the importance of one of his mentors in London.

Apart from Fordie, rolling on the floor undecorously and holding his head in his hands, and groaning on one occasion, I don’t think anybody helped me through my manuscripts. Ford’s stuff appeared too loose then, but he led the fight against tertiary archaisms. (*Paris Review* Summer-Fall 1962)

T.E. Hulme, for his part, had broken off from the Poet’s Club with several other young poets to form a separate group. Pound was also invited, and the influence of this group must have been significant as they discussed the image and “vers libre”. Hulme was the leader of the pack, and strived for an “intuitive poetry freed from cliché and from convention.”

He called for a language of direct visual images ‘which would hand over sensations bodily. And ‘the poet must continually be creating new images’, because the life force in images quickly dies out as they become received associations. (Moody 96)

Hulme wanted to abolish meter and regular verse forms, and called for “a language of direct visual images” (Moody 96). All these ideas are very similar to the statements Pound would later make in his Imagist manifesto, or in “A Retrospect”, in which Pound pleads for “direct treatment of the ‘thing’ either subjective or objective, to use absolutely no word that does not contribute to the presentation” (3). Pound had clearly found like-minded young poets in the group around Hulme. While some, like the poet F.S. Flint, would later claim that Pound had taken his whole Imagist manifesto from the Hulme group, it is more likely that the ideas formed in the years preceding Pound’s Imagist period merely functioned as a blue-print. Most critics, such as Moody, emphasize that “in the matter of freeing verse from meter and regular forms Pound was well ahead of Hulme and his group, and not just in theory but in practical

achievement” (97). Pound’s genius was acknowledged, but it was to prove much harder for him to turn his symbolic profit into economical capital, and he was still dependent on the money his father, Homer, sent him from America. In September Pound signed a contract to write a book based on the lectures he gave, to be called *The Spirit of Romance*. He wrote it merely for the money, since prose never attracted Pound. He said that “if a thing is not sufficiently interesting to be put into poetry, & sufficiently important to make the poetical form worth while, it is hardly worth saying anything at all.” He found the work very exhausting, but it was “a means of procuring food” (qtd. in Moody 100). A month later Mathews published a second volume of Pound’s poetry, titled *Exultations*. Unfortunately, however, it was old wine in a new skin. Most of the poems in the volume had been written before Pound came to America, several had been published in *A Lume Spento* or *A Quinzaine for This Yule*. This indicates that although Pound may already have been convinced of the need of a new type of poetry, the poems published did not testify to that, and neither did his lectures.

In December 1909 he gave a lecture on Arnaut Daniel to the Poet’s Club, the first of a series of twenty-one. With an audience of twenty to thirty persons, the poet received only a pound a week. The subject matter of his lectures affirmed his literary authority on Provence poetry and culture, but was far from innovative. The same can be said of his poetry. The sestina that was published in the *English Review* was a verse form from Provence, and so were his first books of poetry (*Personae*, *Exultations*, and *Canzoni*). Pound doted on Arnaut Daniel, Dante, Cavalcanti, and even Chaucer. The influence of these great masters is perceptible in Pound’s entire career. In the early London years, however, his poetics was also indebted to traditional verse, which resulted in a poetry that was far from refreshing. Laurence Rainey wrote in this respect that Pound offered readers “a species of erudite exoticism, recondite material updated with pungent obiter dicta, a learned mode of writing that could appeal only to an upper-middle-class audience with significant cultural capital” (199). A reviewer of *Canzoni* named Pound “The Modern Troubadour” (qtd. in Rainey). Rainey, on the other hand, speaks of a “telling oxymoron” and states that Pound had become “a living archaism” (199).

2.1.1 The Beginning of Patronage and Change

In February 1910 Pound planned a trip of at least six weeks to Italy, after which he would return to the United States. The day before he left for Verona, Pound spent the night with his American friend Walter Rummel in Paris. He stayed a couple of days longer than planned, and was introduced to Margaret Lanier Cravens. This meeting would turn out to be the most valuable encounter since he had come to Europe. Cravens was an “American expatriate bohemian,” who studied music in Paris and had befriended famous musicians like Rummel and Ravel. She immediately saw the great talent Pound was, and offered “to place enough money at his disposal annually to free him to concentrate on his art” (Moody 124). Margaret Lanier Cravens became his first patron.

Evidence suggests that he [Pound] received about \$1,000, or £200 per annum, a sum that was neither mean nor quite princely. On the eve of World War I in England, the average wage for the adult male industrial worker was about £75 per annum, whereas the average annual income of the salaried class was £340. (Rainey 199)

According to Bourdieu, the literary field is “at all times the site of a struggle between the two principles of hierarchization: the ‘heteronomous principle’ and ‘the autonomous principle’” (40). The heteronomous principle is usually linked to those who dominate the field economically and politically, meaning the bourgeoisie. The autonomous principle, by contrast, goes hand in hand with the principle of art for art’s sake. Writers who choose for the latter are “least endowed with specific capital” and “identify with degree of independence from the economy.” They also see “temporal failure as a sign of election and success as a sign of compromise” (Bourdieu 140). Pound accepted Craven’s offer and saw it as a “sign from beyond” that his work was accepted (Moody 124). Since he was now dependent on a member of the aristocracy, however, he had become a less autonomous writer than when he was financially dependent on his father. In the following two years Pound’s income would amount to “about £400 per year, with reasonable chance of increase,” which signified that he was approaching “the promised land of the salaried class” (*EP/DS* 87).

Pound returned to America for a visit in June 1910 and met W.B. Yeats’ father, a painter, who introduced him to his patron John Quinn. Pound would stay in contact with Quinn, who would become “the principal patron of those modernist writers and artists for whom Pound acted as an unpaid impresario” (Ruthven 52). A year later Pound traveled to Paris and discovered “a ferment of new work” there. Cubism was flourishing with Braque and Picasso in front, “the

Nouvelle Revue Française was alive with new writing,” and the Russian Ballet performed Stravinsky. “The modern renaissance he wanted was well under way and he was not yet part of it” (Moody 156). Nevertheless, things were looking good for Pound. In October of 1911 he was introduced to Alfred Orage, the editor of the *New Age*. They agreed that Pound would write a column at a guinea a week. Moreover, Orage introduced the American poet to his publisher, “Charles Granville of Stephen Swift and Company, who was going to offer him £100 a year for ten years in return for publishing all Pound’s new books” (Moody 167).

On top of that, Pound was still lecturing, and he could still count on Margaret Cravens, although her father had committed suicide in April 1911 leaving her no money (Moody 167). Intellectually, Pound was also making headway. Returning from a brief exile, he felt more confident than ever. He believed that “he was now at the end of his apprenticeship. He had behind him his *Canzoni* and his studies in Guido Cavalcanti and Arnaut Daniel; and *Ripostes*, his next collection, would be ready for Stephen Swift in February” (Moody 167).

Within the literary field Bourdieu makes a distinction between the field of restricted production and the field of large-scale cultural production. The first normally produces cultural goods “destined for a public of producers of cultural goods”, while the latter is “organized with a view to the production of cultural goods destined for non-producers of cultural goods ‘the public at large’” (115). Pound focused most of his career on the field of restricted cultural production, namely a field that “can be measured by its power to define its own criteria for the production and evaluation of its products” and is “irreducible to any external factors of economic, political or social differentiation” (115). The first period of his time in London, however, he seems to have been part of a modified field of restricted production. The three lectures on “Mediaeval Poetry” he gave in March of 1912, for instance, were private. “Tickets were not commodities that could be purchased, but favors that might be courteously requested” (Rainey 200). A typical aspect of cultural goods produced in the field of restricted cultural production is that they are only accessible to those possessing enough cultural capital, often those who are themselves producers of the field of restricted production. One part of the target group of Pound’s specific field of restricted production in that year were indeed artists, as defined by Bourdieu in his description of the restricted field, but another part were bourgeois elitist non-producers.

Here was the realm of elite bourgeois culture in which Pound's career had been fashioned prior to 1912: a world withdrawn from public life and insulated from the grim imperatives of a commodity economy, a sphere in which literary culture had been largely

privatized, serving as a medium of exchange for an exiguous aristocracy of sensibility, a court of intellect. (Rainey 200)

The three lectures Pound gave in March, for example, were only accessible for fifty people. Although Pound is still remembered as an individualistic writer, it cannot be denied that he was part of the bourgeoisie at a certain point in his career, whether it was of sheer necessity or not. He may not have possessed a great deal of economical capital himself, but he was dependent on those who did. This meant that he also had little room to be too creative or renewing. In this respect Pound was not so different from other prominent artists of that period. Eliot, Joyce, and Woolf, for instance, were in the same boat.

Of the three competing principles of legitimacy that Bourdieu describes in *The Field of Cultural Production*, mentioned earlier under 2.1, Pound had actually already fulfilled two by 1910 -- art for art's sake legitimacy and bourgeois legitimacy--, and was about to fulfill a third. This is extraordinary, since all three principles are usually mutually exclusive. When arriving in London, Pound was granted recognition by "the set of producers who produce for other producers" (50). The literary circle around T.E. Hulme that broke off from the Poet's Club, and came together in a closed room, was an autonomous group. It represented art for art's sake, and when Pound was fully accepted by the group, he had fulfilled the first principle of legitimacy. Ford Madox Ford, for example, who had somewhat the same innovative poetic plans as Hulme, also recognized Pound's talent. At the same time, but even more so after Pound had returned from the United States, the second principle, being "the principle of legitimacy corresponding to 'bourgeois' taste and to the consecration bestowed by the dominant fractions of the dominant class," was achieved. Pound, through his close relation with Olivia Shakespeare and her daughter, was in close contact with the higher class of London society. Simultaneously, he provided the salons and aristocratic public with authorized high art. The last competing principle, however, that of "the consecration bestowed by the choice of ordinary consumers" (Bourdieu 50), was yet to be fulfilled. The second of three lectures he would give in March 1912, and the following month, would alter his poetics and his target group. Pound would take a shot at reaching the mass audience, consumers who were not elitist.

2.2 The Second Period -- Before the War

When Pound gave his second lecture on 12 March 1912, he was confronted with the fact that the avant-gardist Futurist movement scooped up all the attention. Marinetti, the Futurist Italian innovator, was giving a lecture at exactly the same time as Pound's lecture on mediaeval poetry. Only one day later Marinetti's lecture was "fully reported in the morning edition of *The Daily Chronicle*", and the subsequent days articles on Marinetti appeared in the *Morning Leader* and the *Times* (Rainey 202). The content of Marinetti's lecture was revolutionary, and while Pound still avoided a clash with the establishment, his lecture became faint compared to the Futurist's bombastic march. Marinetti's outspokenness on English culture received so much attention that he earned more money in six weeks than Pound in a whole year. The biggest contrast with Pound's lecture, aside from its content, was that he spoke for a much wider audience. Tickets for Marinetti's lecture were ten times cheaper than those for Pound's, and ten times more people attended it. On top of that, Marinetti reached an even greater audience through the publicity and reporting in the newspapers. Marinetti was part of the large-scale cultural production, not because the content of his material was conform to standardized norms, but because his revolutionary ideas appealed to the public at large. He was doing what Pound would struggle with his entire life, reaching audience of non-producers. Rainey states that it is in the light of the Futuristic popularity that Pound coined the French term "Les Imagistes", and included "a brief statement" at the end of *Ripostes* "to designate the new school." Rainey calls this "an obvious echo", since Marinetti lectured in French about "Les Futuristes" (Rainey 202). This was only one of Pound's literary strategies he was so keen of. Pound later confessed that he had coined the term on "a Hulme basis", but that he had "carefully made a name that was not & never had been used in France" (Ruthven 68).

Pound seemed to incline towards Marinetti's type of art production. He had seen how profitable it could be and started looking in the same direction, away from the bourgeois concept of art. As if driven by fate, several occurrences later that year left Pound little options but to change his course. Margaret Cravens, who had supported Pound financially for the past two years, committed suicide in June 1912, and "the publishing firm that had guaranteed him £100 per year collapsed" (Rainey 203). Pound found himself yet again without sufficient income.

2.2.1 Imagism

Pound did not inform his father of his loss of income, and decided to take the plunge and attempt to become a self-supporting artist. Ezra Pound, as he is remembered today, the writer who would reject all established artistic norms and never fear assertive statements, was born. Pound became an avant-garde artist himself and no longer associated himself with the Edwardian literary world. At this point he launched the “Imagiste” movement. Imagism can be seen as the herald of Vorticism, the movement that would follow two years later. The key thoughts of Vorticism were printed in the first edition of *BLAST* that was published in 1914, but the poetic ideas were very similar to Pound’s earlier pronouncements on Imagism. The discussion of the later movement further on is therefore indispensable for a good understanding of Imagism.

The creation of a new movement in the field of literary production always creates an alteration. Pound changed his course and went from being a rather mainstream poet to an avant-garde poet, and acted not only as an individual but as a spokesperson for a school. Before explaining the intrinsic features of the new school, it is interesting to see what the creation of the new school caused in the literary field.

Change in the space of literary or artistic possibles is the result of change in the power relation which constitutes the space of positions. When a new literary or artistic group makes its presence felt in the field of literary or artistic production, the whole problem is transformed, since its coming into being, i.e. into difference, modifies and displaces the universe of possible options; the previously dominant productions may, for example, be pushed into the status either of outmoded [*déclassé*] or of classic works. (Bourdieu 32)

What happened was that “the relations among the institutions in which the discourse of art and poetry had been produced” were being reconfigured. Both intellectuals and artists had to “come to terms with the role of new institutions of mass culture and assess their bearings on the place of art in a cultural marketplace being radically transformed” (Rainey 210). A work of art truly became a commercial item, in which the rules of supply and demand influenced the production in the literary field. In the case of Pound, more specifically, we are dealing with an artist who never really received the popular attention others did -- Marinetti for instance --, and who would soon be caught in the middle between the elite and the mass culture. “The answer,” Rainey writes, “was to do a little of both at once -- to reconstruct an aristocracy, but to reconstruct it within the world of the commodity” (210). Pound would further extend his image of being an important artist, to give value to his work in the long run. His writings may not have

been very lucrative at the moment of production; the attempt was to turn them into valuable goods that could be purchased as “an investment whose value will be realized only in the future.” Rainey compares art in this respect with “news that stays news” (211).

When Pound sent Harriet Monroe, the editor of *Poetry* in the United States, poems by himself and H.D., the promotion of the new artistic movement had begun. The poems were characterized as “Imagiste” (Rainey 202). The essay that he published in *Poetry* in January 1913 functioned as a manifesto and stated that “Imagism was the youngest school here that has the nerve to call itself a school” (qtd. in Rainey 202). Pound wanted a more straight-forward art form and rejected the established Victorian poetry. Rainey compares Pound’s use of the term school with Marinetti’s use. It appears that the latter had rejected the term school “for its associations with the taxonomies of academic art history”, and rather opted for the term movement. According to Marinetti, “a school was something more informal, more casual, more individualistic” (203). Pound, however, who was technically schooled, wanted to reform his world in a different manner. Both artists had in common that they turned against the dullness of conventional society, but the intrinsic content could not be more dissimilar. Pound was an intellectual, and stressed the technical nature of Imagism. Rainey describes the school as follows:

Imagism, in short, was a movement to end movements: informal, antitheoretical, absorbed in matters of writerly technique and averse to more global programs that linked poetry to contemporary social transformations or posed questions about the status and functions of art. (204)

He continues by saying that Imagism is “commonly treated as the first avant-garde movement in Anglo-American literature,” but that it was in fact “the first anti-avant-garde movement” (Rainey 204). Rainey thus portrays Futurism as being the true avant-garde movement, and regards Imagism not as a competing avant-garde school, but as a dominating shadow structure in the field of literary production. Pound and “Les Imagistes” did indeed reject the Futurists, but stating that they are not a revolutionary school is debatable. Rainey claims that “their only endeavor was to write in accordance with the best tradition, as they found in the best writers of the time, --in Sappho, Catullus, Villon--,” but there is more to it. In origin Imagism was indeed not involved with social transformations, but it did question art, especially the intrinsic qualities of poetry. Pound wanted to transform and renovate poetry in English “and advance the cause of intellectual liberty.” He wanted to bring about a poetic renaissance, both in England and in America “as a foreign correspondent of *Poetry*” (Moody 199). Imagism was a

school that aspired to throw down established poetic forms, and criticized established writers favored by the elite. By directly aiming his arrows not only at the content of contemporary poetry, but also at its established authors, -- which were supported by the bourgeoisie -- Pound indirectly attacked social conventions and structure. Imagism was a “movement of criticism rather than of creation that set out to bring poetry up to the level of prose” (Schneidau 215). Pound detested contemporary poetry and called it “a doughy mess of third-hand Keats, Wordsworth, heaven knows what” (“Hell” 205). In his “Affirmations” series later on in the *New Age* Pound restated his original ideas on Imagism.

One discards rhyme, not because one is incapable of rhyming neat, fleet, sweet, meet, treat, eat, feet, but because there are certain emotions or energies which are not to be represented by the over-familiar devices or patterns; just as there are certain ‘arrangements of form’ that cannot be worked into dados. (*New Age* Jan. 28, 1915)

Pound and the Imagists would soon reject all prescribed rules the Edwardians were so keen of. Pound was aiming to change his most beloved art form, and pleaded for “economy of language” (Moody 222). Poetry had to be “objective -- no slither -- direct -- no excess of adjectives. Etc. No metaphors that won’t permit examination. -- It’s straight talk -- straight as the Greek!”¹ (qtd. in Kenner 174). Pound’s philosophy of life was to “Make it New”. In his essay published in 1934 in London under that title, Pound summarized his whole theory in one sentence: “Quand la forme n’est pas nouvelle, le fond ne l’est non plus” (MIN 325). Clearly, one cannot modernize an art form by simply changing the ingredients of an already established recipe. In order to really make it new, a brand new formula was needed. The “stiffness and literary idiom” should be broken up by introducing a different meter. When it comes to rhythm, Pound stated in his Imagist manifesto from 1912, one should “compose in the sequence of the musical phrase, not in the sequence of a metronome.” By doing so, the emphasis shifts from “strictly prosodic practices to musical ones” (McNaughton 136). To summarize one could say that the meter should be adapted to the mood (Eliot 1917: 5), and that the “repertoire of poetic rhythms in English” should not only be enlarged, but also that those new “conversational and quasi-conversational rhythms” should be “exploited” (McNaughton 138). What is even more significant, however, is that to attain good poetry there has to be a “union of words, rhythm and music” (Bucknell 57). To achieve that, it is of the uttermost importance to select the right word.

¹ Pound wrote this in a letter to Harriet Monroe in 1912

The poet needs to have “the ability to compose words which prescribe the voice which should utter them.” It is only the poet “with an ‘ear,’ [those] who never separate word from sounding tone and the percussive rhythm of consonants” who can accomplish that (Cambridge 236).

The poets who published their poems in *Poetry* in November 1912 and January 1913 under the denominator Imagism, were “said to be a group of ardent Hellenists who are pursuing interesting experiments in ‘vers libre’” (qtd. in Moody 222). Pound did not agree and stated that “Hellenism & vers libre have nothing to do with it -- ‘Imagism’ is concerned solely with ‘language and presentation’”² (qtd. in Moody 222). One should be cautious naming any type of verse that does not use conventional meter or rhyme free verse. Eliot also warned for misuse of the term: “Any verse is called ‘free’ by people whose ears are not accustomed to it—in the second place, Pound’s use of this medium has shown the temperance of the artist, and his belief in it as a vehicle is not that of the fanatic” (1917: 7). In Pound’s Imagist manifesto, of which he restated the key thoughts in “A Retrospect”, he provided a set of guidelines on how Imagist poetry should be conceived. As mentioned before, Pound pleaded for “direct treatment of the ‘thing’ either subjective or objective” (“Retrospect” 3). The importance of those last two nouns cannot be stressed enough. The basic idea of the theory is that “the natural object is the proper and perfect symbol” (qtd. in Moody 225). As an example, Moody presents the image of a hawk, and says that a hawk “must be always as a hawk and not any other thing, whatever further ‘symbolic’ sense, as in heraldry or heroic poetry, might be attached to it” (225). He points out that there is always a certain subjectivity at play since the hawk presented is a “hawk-in-the-mind,” a “subjective mental object” (225). What is important is “the precise instant when a thing outward and objective transforms itself ... into a thing inward and subjective” (qtd. in Moody 225). The ultimate culminating point of this metamorphosis is reached “when the faces seen in the underground station become ‘petals on a wet, black, bough,’” Moody writes (225), Pound’s best practical example of his Imagist theory.

The poet’s often quoted statement on rhythm goes hand in hand with this: “To compose in the sequence of the musical phrase, not in sequence of a metronome” (“Retrospect” 3). Pound’s poetry is a modified version of free verse, and can be seen as a textbook example that does away with the misconception that free verse should be more simplistic than conventional verse. Pound applauded the fresh verse form because it allowed poetry to speak or sing for itself,

² Pound in a letter to Alice Corbin Henderson, assistant editor at *Poetry* Magazine.

but he brought it to a higher level. Kenner writes that “vers libre, which exacts composition in the sequence of the musical phrase ... affords a means ... for holding the poem’s elements firmly in relation to one another” (189). The rhythm created through Pound’s free verse has as objective to represent the intended “particular creative emotion or energy” (*New Age* Jan. 28, 1915).

Just like “free verse”, the “direct treatment” Pound pleads for is another delicate item. Pound does not simply appeal for the use of everyday language; rather does he aspire after the right word. Words that do not contribute to the poem should be left out. This theory goes hand in hand with his disapproval of purely ornamental metaphors. Of all the metaphysical poets, he said, Donne is the only one who can say what “he means” instead of simply “hunting for sentiments that will fit his vocabulary” (ABC 140). He had already hammered on this principle in his “Osiris” series printed in the *New Age*.

Directness of utterance, which is different from the simplicity and directness of daily speech, which is more “curial,” more dignified. This difference, this dignity, cannot be conferred by florid adjectives or elaborate hyperbole; it must be conveyed by art, and by the art of the verse structure, by something which exalts the reader, making him feel that he is in contact with something arranged more finely than the commonplace. (*New Age* Feb. 15, 1912)

To fully appreciate this effect, to understand the verse structure, one must see a verse line multilateral. Pound referred to it as “the fixed and the mobile”, or as Bucknell puts it, the synchronic and the diachronic (77). Bucknell explains this by comparing the stratification of a verse line to an ideogram, in which the meaning of the symbol is the symbol. “It is in the theory of harmony that the issue of relations between two sounds, here figured by time, becomes more important than the specific notes played” (Bucknell 78). Similar to music’s basic principle, the linearity of different tones is important. Pound stated that “a sound of any pitch, or any combination of such sounds, may be followed by a sound of any other pitch.” What is necessary, however, is that “the time interval between them is properly gauged” (qtd. in Bucknell 78). Thus, the single unit is part of an entirety which gives meaning to that single unit through the other units that are part of the entirety. It is only through that linearity that the “congruence of word and emotion” arises.

This highly technical and abstract explanation Pound gave in his essays on Imagism was part of his new literary marketing plan. He wanted to create a new school that aspired to act as a counter-weight to the dominating avant-garde movement that Futurism was, so his theory had to

be persuasive. Pound put together an “anthology to present his ‘Imagistes’ as a force in the world” (Moody 222). In order to really come across as a group, Pound recruited associates whose work could be labeled “Imagist”. Amy Lowell was a self-proclaimed “Imagiste” and attached herself to the group. Pound did not share her opinion but needed her cooperation since she was “wealthy and forceful” (Moody 222). William Carlos Williams was also included -- although he himself would “never wear the label” of “Imagist”-- Ford Madox Ford³ was, and even a poem by James Joyce was incorporated in the volume (Moody 223). *Des Imagistes* was only printed in 1914, and it never made “much of a splash at the time, receiving little notice outside its own circles” (Moody 223). Futurism, on the other hand, was by far the most dominating avant-garde movement in the field. Although Rainey calls Imagism an anti avant-garde school, contemplating the movements from a different perspective offers a different outcome. Futurism dominated the avant-garde position in the literary field, but Imagism and later Vorticism can be seen as competing movements for that position. Since none of Pound’s groups found the wide response Futurism did, the positions in the field did not change, but both Imagism and Vorticism did manage to occupy a place in the literary field that opposed the heteronomous bourgeois art. Being a movement that was initially founded to launch H.D. and Aldington, it was a school that produced for its producers and therefore belonged to the field of restricted cultural production. Compared to a movement like Futurism, the Imagists gained very little economical profit, so it can be argued that Imagism as a school, from the economical viewpoint, was more avant-gardist than Futurism.

This is a typical example of “the duality of the principles of hierarchization,” which happens within the literary field -- not in the field of power -- “in which the antagonism between the occupants of the polar positions is more total” (Bourdieu 46). What happens is that there are “polar individuals” who may actually never meet, and who may “even ignore each other systematically, to the extent of refusing each other membership of the same class, and yet their practice remains determined by the negative relation which unites them” (Bourdieu 46). Both Pound and Marinetti were striving for the title of leading the ultimate avant-garde movement. With hindsight, it appears that Futurism won over Imagism/Vorticism, but the actors in the field at the time did not come to that conclusion. In *BLAST*, for instance, Pound would later write that

³ He was born Ford Hermann Hueffer, changed his name to Ford Madox Hueffer, and finally settled on the name Ford Madox Ford. Although he only changed his surname to Ford after 1914, I will refer to him as Ford Madox Ford under any occasion.

“Futurism is the disgorging spray of a vortex with no drive behind it, DISPERSAL” (“Vortex. Pound.” 153). “It could be said that the agents involved in the literary or artistic field may, in extreme cases, have nothing in common except the fact of taking part in a struggle to impose the legitimate definition of literary or artistic production” (Bourdieu 46). What Pound did, was making his mark, “initiating a new epoch” in order to win recognition. He had to stress his difference from other producers, especially the most consecrated of them, and at the same time create “a new position, ahead of the positions already occupied, in the vanguard” (Bourdieu 60).

2.2.2 The Strategy of the Literary Critic, Agent and Machiavellian

Pound would define his conception of the legitimate mode of cultural production via numerous articles in little magazines; especially his “I Gather the Limbs of Osiris” series between November 1911 and January 1912 in the *New Age* were an influential medium. The content of these articles was purely theoretical, and not as offensive as what would follow. In these articles the critic abundantly praised the writers who served as a role model. Besides Guido Cavalcanti, Dante and Chaucer the person and achievement of Arnaut Daniel, who was probably his biggest influence, was emphasized. The works of these masters served as the theoretical framework of how poetry ought to be conceived according to Pound. He wrote that “in the canzone of Arnaut Daniel we find a beauty, a beauty of elements almost unused in these two other very different sorts of poetry,” referring to “The Seafarer” and “Guido’s lyrics” (*New Age* Dec. 21, 1911). Pound translated some of Arnaut Daniel’s poems, and published them with additional remarks in the *New Age* edition of January 11, 1912. Pound praised and promoted the work of an artist he considered the public should acknowledge.

In the subsequent years, Pound would do the same for working artists via numerous essays in diverse magazines. Sometimes he would just mention a writer to one of his influential contacts, as in a letter to Harriet Monroe, editor of *Poetry* magazine, saying “that if he himself were an editor he would probably publish D.H. Lawrence’s work ‘without reading it’” (qtd. in Ruthven 38). She published a review by Pound of D.H. Lawrence’s *Love poems and others* in 1913, in which the poet praised his poet-friend to the skies. It said that “there is no English poet under forty who can get within shot of him” and compares Lawrence’s writing with a Rembrandt masterpiece (“D.H.L.” 387). To endorse his statement even more Pound added that “if this book

does not receive the Polignac prize⁴ a year from this November, there will be due cause for scandal” (“D.H.L.” 388). In that same year he wrote to Monroe to reserve a dozen pages “for a selection of poems from John Gould Fletcher’s *Irradiations*” (Ruthven 57). Pound was always clever about whom he would boost. It seems that there was always some deal of self-interest involved. Ruthven writes that Fletcher was promoted because he lent Pound his “books of French poetry,” which Pound needed for his series of “The Approach to Paris” to be published in the *New Age*. Pound pampered Monroe in the same way when he included “one of her own poems” in his *Des Imagistes* series, in order to have them reprinted by her (Ruthven 58). One can also wonder why Pound published *The Poetical Works of Lionel Johnson*. Lionel Johnson was a cousin of Olivia Shakespear, who was not only the mother of his wife Dorothy, but also a high society woman. It was thanks to Olivia that Ezra Pound had made contact with Yeats, among others, and this was a chance to repay her for her kindness. Nevertheless, the gist of the artists Pound promoted was selected because of the merit of their writings.

Ruthven writes that the artists “Pound decided to encourage were perceived by him as ‘discoveries,’ and if the relationship came to anything he would try to assign them to a variety of positions described by such terms as ‘protégé’, ‘disciple’, ‘neophyte’ and ‘acolyte’” (89). Ruthven continues that Pound considered them as “lands remote from imperial centres,” as “*terra nullius* until come upon by explorers in the service of exploiters” (89). This was not always accurate, it seems. Frost, for instance -- one of Pound’s “discoveries” -- had already been discovered by a London publisher, “for his first book of poems, *A Boy’s Will*” (Ruthven 89). Whether this is entirely Pound’s attitude or the retelling of narrations, is hard to say. The same would happen with Joyce, who was actually discovered by Yeats, and with Eliot, whose famous poem “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” had been shown to Harold Monroe before Eliot showed it to Pound (Ruthven 90). What is a fact, however, is that Pound was the launch pad for their careers. Ruthven gives another version of the facts, in which not Pound is to blame for these slight inaccuracies, but the writers of literary history:

In Pound’s subsequent retellings of the story -- all of them accurate -- Eliot’s poetry and Joyce’s prose were published where and when they were only as a result of Pound’s own perseverance in protracted dealings with editors and publishers; but, in the course of these retellings, details came to be erased from that narrative of the facilitator as hero, and

⁴ “This prize, awarded by the British academic committee to Walter de la Mare in 1911, to Masfield in 1912, is given for a work of imagination which must have appeared before the November previous” (“D.H.L.” 388).

Pound came to be inscribed in literary history as the “discoverer” of Joyce and Eliot. (Ruthven 90)

Nevertheless, it is not he who first stumbles upon a great work of art who is of paramount importance for the work to become famous, but he who appreciates the work and makes sure it is published and promoted. Pound was indispensable for both Joyce and Eliot’s careers, and he deserves credit for his inexhaustible efforts.

In Joyce Pound had found a soul mate who had achieved in prose what Pound demanded for in poetry. He had finally come across an impressionist writer who could do more than imitate what Monet did in painting. Joyce was a writer who could present individuals instead of characters, and who did not “rely upon Dickensian caricatures” (“Dubliners” 401). In poetry, Pound pleaded for the direct treatment, for “le mot juste” and the elimination of all unnecessary words. In prose, Joyce excelled most “of the impressionist writers because of his more rigorous selection, because of his exclusion of all unnecessary details” (“Dubliners” 401). In 1914 Pound wrote a review of Joyce’s *Dubliners* that was published in the *Egoist*. He compared Joyce with the great French writers, called his prose “free from sloppiness,” and claimed that Joyce presents subjective things “with such clarity of outline that he might be dealing with locomotives or with builders’ specifications” (“Dubliners” 399).

Aside from his reputation as writer and as critic, Pound had a certain magic that opened doors which remained closed for others. He could practically coerce anyone into publishing the work of his protégés. In fact, one might go so far as to say that Pound was no longer merely influential, but to some extent manipulative. Pound was an illusionist who could create a world of make-believe for an audience he tried to control. He did not sell lies, but exaggerations, and had the skill to convincingly argue that a mediocre piece of art was something unique. Pound was “one of history’s greatest advertisers,” as E.E. Cummings would later proclaim (Ruthven 61). It all began in a very innocent way when Pound deliberately published only hundred fifty copies of *A Lume Spento* to “ensure the book’s status as a collector’s item,” and so he could quickly announce that the first edition was exhausted (Ruthven 60). Pound proved his cunningness when he decided to write “ghosted reviews” of the volume, and asked friends to sign them. Pound had them printed in newspapers hoping for a reprint, but without success. In this respect, Ruthven writes:

For what is revealed in this first and unsuccessful attempt by Pound to market a literary commodity of his own is his conviction that literary texts make their way in the world not

by some supposedly intrinsic merit as literature but by claims made on their behalf by criticism. (61)

The future, however, would prove that Pound's way of slightly manipulating the literary market is the correct way to accomplish one's goal. This goes hand in hand with Bourdieu's theory of the cultural field, which "might be characterized as a radical contextualization" (9).

It takes into consideration not only works themselves, seen relationally within the space of available possibilities and within the historical development of such possibilities, but also producers of works in terms of their strategies and trajectories, based on their individual and class habitus, as well as their objective position within the field. (Bourdieu 9)

Pound exploited all available possibilities to achieve the desired position within the literary field for either himself or the producers for whom he acted as an agent of consecration. Pound's strategy was to "fool enough of the people enough of the time to enable a new way of writing to survive until its potential readership has been educated into appreciating it" (Ruthven 61). The trajectory Pound followed was to first sell the product through his advertisement, and afterwards provide the goods. "The ends justify the means," Ruthven writes, since it is "the only way of breaking the hegemony of a literary critical establishment" since "the opposition habitually behaves just as disreputably" (62).

It is striking how Pound lingered between Bourdieu's theory on the one hand, and that of a Russian Formalist like Jakobson on the other. It seems that the pragmatist in Pound opted for Bourdieu's approach, but that the idealist desired to act by Jakobson's ideology. Pound wanted to do away with the established literary processes in which position, reputation and connections were the primary conditions to see your work in print. Yet, although he preached for works to be assessed by their intrinsic "literariness", he created an atmosphere that was not so very different from the one he revolted against. According to Jakobson, "literariness" is "that which makes a given work a literary work" (qtd. in Johnson 10). The romantic Pound who was an idealistic creator and loved beautiful sounding poetry believed this, but at the same time realized that literariness was not enough to achieve success. Bourdieu did not agree with Jakobson's theory that a literary work becomes a literary work because of its literary qualities. The work of art becomes valuable as a result of the attention, the legitimization, given to the work by authorized actors in the field of literary production. Randal Johnson names this "a complex social and institutional framework which authorizes and sustains literature and literary practice" (11).

Pound used his position and reputation to show a specific work of art in the best possible light. The value of the work was assessed not by its literariness, but by the literary tricks that went hand in hand with the publication of the work.

In Pound's defense, however, it can be stated that he had no other choice than to participate in the system that had made him. In order to overthrow a corrupt government one must often first take part in corruption oneself. That might have been why Pound opted to follow Bourdieu's trajectory first, to hopefully end up in a literary world where Jakobson's ideology is the criterion. Pound would continue his practices of writing ghosted reviews or acting both as publisher and reviewer for the same works the following years, playing games with readers. Reputation and appearance were of the utmost importance in order to achieve success. The reputation of the individual could affect the reputation of the group. Marinetti, for instance, was the face of Futurism and could affect the entire movement by his actions. Pound was the leader and spokesperson for the Imagist School, which had to appear united and opposed to Futurism at all times for the sake of art. Relations within the Pound circle were bitter from time to time, and although Pound's opinions were not always shared by his fellow artists, it was often smarter to act along. The relation with Eliot, Lewis and Joyce turned sour over the years, but "the revolution in writing they were engineering collectively was too important to be jeopardized by personal tantrums" (Ruthven 65).

2.2.3 Little Magazines

By writing columns, essays and poetry for diverse literary magazines, Pound succeeded in providing a sufficient income for himself, thus becoming an autonomous writer. He received money from the *New Age* and the *English Review* -- *Poetry* would follow not much later --, and from his publisher in Boston. In 1913 Pound also published in

quite a range of other periodicals: mainstream British literary reviews, upstart little magazines on both sides of the Atlantic, 'smart' American magazines featuring high- and lowbrow material in tandem, and British working-class papers reaching entirely different audiences than either of these other venues. The *Fortnightly Review*, for example, featured Pound's review of *The Poems of Rabindranath Tagore* in March 1913; the *Quarterly Review* printed a lengthy article on troubadour poetry in October. (Ardis 411)

In the mean time the poet continued his lectures which brought in "further small amounts" (Moody 204). This autonomy might have been the reason why Pound's attitude towards his environment would undergo an abrupt change. Schneidau writes that Pound concentrated on

making friends “in his early days in London, eager to break into artistic circles” but that he had “switched to the habit of making enemies” by 1913. The critic continues that “by 1914 Pound saw harassment and neglect of artists all around him; his friend Hueffer [Ford Madox Ford] had suffered as a writer from social disapproval of his divorce troubles, [and] Joyce, Eliot, Lewis, and Lawrence were struggling to have their works published” (215). More than ever the literary critic and agent in Pound were born. He started his mission to help writers break through, just like he was boosted by others when he came to Europe six years earlier. Pound would focus on criticism instead of writing poetry in the next phase of his life. His dream was to alter the literary world by evaluating texts without bearing the author in mind. He wanted to judge “writing by criteria designed to sift the durable from the transient” (Ruthven 55), or achieve a literary world in which “literariness” is the criterion, as I pointed out in the previous chapter. Understanding that it was the fashionable society and its additional contacts that had made him, a cunning marketing strategy was needed. Already when he first arrived in London, he appreciated that good poetry would not suffice.

Whatever the *Philadelphia Press* may have believed, it was not because of his “poems of so much merit” that Pound gained a special place in the highest literary circles. Russian Formalist’s ideas about “literariness” were not widespread enough to change the literary scene in Europe, and it seemed doubtful that Pound would achieve a similar literary upheaval on his own. Pound recognized this when he described London as “a capital where everybody’s Aunt Lucy or Uncle George has written something or other⁵” (“Mr. Hueffer” 112), and where one could easily have one’s work printed if one had a family member in the publishing industry. Pound started writing critical essays about art, stating that “poetry is an art and not a pastime” (“Retrospect” 10). In his writings he stepped on the toes of high-principled gentlemen, whom he called “amateurs,” and pleaded for professional criticism in which skill mattered instead of reputation and class. The establishment, however, did not respond via writings, but in a manner that would hurt Pound more and would offer him no chance to fight back. They retaliated in the form of “social ostracism”. Pound was less and less invited to dinner parties, and became a solitary soldier in the succeeding years. In October 1912 he wrote to Monroe: “it hits me in my dinner invitations, in my weekends ... Nevertheless it’s a good fight” (qtd. in Ruthven 54).

⁵ Pound touched on this in his article “Mr. Hueffer and the Prose Tradition in Verse” that was first published in *Poetry* in 1914, and reprinted in *Literary Essay of Ezra Pound*.

The most influential medium of the time to spread one's thoughts were the literary magazines. These periodicals published not only short stories, poetry and essays, but also a great deal of literary criticism and reviews. They acted as "open, heterogeneous social settings" (Churchill, McKible 2), and were probably the strongest artistic mediators in the literary field. Bourdieu mentions publishers, critics, agents, "marchands," and academies as "producers of the meaning and value of work", and at least half of these were incorporated in the literary magazines. They -- the writers, editors and publishers of the periodicals -- had the power to choose which work would become "an expression of the field" and which would not (Bourdieu 14). Some had thousands of subscribers, while others like the *Egoist* had only a few hundreds. Some stopped appearing after only two issues, *BLAST* for example, while others like the *Dial* were sponsored by wealthy individuals. No matter their life span, or their finances, they all had some aspects in common. Churchill and McKible describe them as "non-commercial enterprises founded by individuals or small groups intent upon publishing the experimental works or radical opinions of untried, unpopular, or under-represented writers (3). The amount of radicalness varied, obviously, and it seemed that the more radical they were, the sooner they disappeared. Some literary magazines were so outrageous that they "incurred governmental wrath and censorship" (Churchill, McKible 2), but those which flirted successfully with the accepted norm were most influential. The modernist little magazines "wove webs of interaction and influence, set trends, established and ruined reputations, and shaped the course of modernism" (Churchill, McKible 2).

The strength of the literary magazines was again not its quality of writings, but its position in "the field of power"⁶. The very best appealed to elitist readerships which were "willing to exercise their minds to comprehend aesthetic movements such as Futurism, Imagism, and Dada" (Churchill, McKible 4). Among those readerships were very influential people who belonged to the field of power. Supported by them, little magazines could feed their readership something unexpected from time to time, and thus slightly alter literary conventions. Pound, for instance, was never afraid to turn a phrase in his columns. His contributions to the literary magazine the *New Age* indicate this. Under the title "I gather the Limbs of Osiris" the poet published a first series of essays on music and rhythm. In these early publications Pound explained his thoughts on quantitative verse and verse based on the alternation of stressed and

⁶ Set of dominant power relations in society or, in other words, the ruling classes. (Johnson 17)

unstressed syllables, especially with relation to musicality and rhythm. In one of these essays he stated to “let the poet who has been not too long ago born make very sure of this, that no one cares to hear, in strained iambs” (*New Age* Jan. 25, 1912). In his essay “A Few Don’ts”, which was printed in *Poetry* in 1913, he made another clear statement by speaking out against all critics who have never written a “notable work” themselves, and advised the readers not to pay attention to them (“Retrospect” 4). In his Imagism manifesto Pound dared to comment on one of the greatest English writers of all time, Wordsworth, by saying that he “was so intent on the ordinary or plain word that he never thought of hunting for ‘le mot juste’,” a pillar of Pound’s poetic foundation. His critique on Milton was yet to come, and would stir the literary world even more.

2.2.3.1 The *New Age*

The *New Age* was the first “big” little magazine that gave space to Pound. It was actually a political weekly that also published a range of literary works “by writers such as T.E. Hulme, Wyndham Lewis, F.T. Marinetti, and Ezra Pound.”

It published these writers side by side with articles challenging their work: visual and verbal parodies of modernist texts, artists, and manifestos; columns by the editor and other regular contributors questioning specific aesthetic precepts; and letters to the editor that continued debate about such concerns from one issue to the next. (Ardis 408).

It were those “columns by the editor” and “letters to the editor” that would upset Pound time after time. Nevertheless, he wrote a column for the magazine for years on end, with brief intervals. The tone of the columns, however, would change from slightly nasty to simply offensive over the years. Pound’s “I Gather the Limbs of Osiris” series⁷, for example, was “remarkably free of the sense of disdain for the uneducated or miseducated general public that so often [colored] his later writings” (Ardis 412). When it came to insulting people, Pound was an expert, and it would soon lead to his standing alone, again. In “Patria Mia” he wrote: “Hence, when I say openly that there is more artistic impulse in America than in any country in Europe, I am in no peril of being believed (*New Age* Oct. 3, 1912). Pound continuously offended English literature and gave as only reason to live in London that it was “at least some centuries nearer” the “Paradiso Terrestre” than St Louis was (Moody 209). In the same article in the *New Age* Pound again spoke out against the poetic ideas surrounding him.

⁷ Published in the *New Age* between November 1911 and February 1912.

Poetry is not a sort of embroidery, cross-stitch, crochet, for pensionnaires, nor yet a post-prandial soporific for the bourgeoisie. We need the old feud between the artist and the smuggler portions of the community revived with some virulence for the welfare of things at large. (*New Age* Oct. 3, 1912)

Pound started acting as a vicious competitor who identified the established artists and writers in the London scene with the “dominant principles of hierarchization.” All conventional ideas of the definition of human accomplishment were overthrown by Pound. In this respect Bourdieu speaks of a struggle between “the artists and writers who are richest in specific capital and most concerned for their autonomy” and their competitors who “seek to impose them even within the field, with the support of temporal powers” (Bourdieu 41). When Pound first came to Europe he sought the support of the dominant actors in the field of power, so as to achieve sufficient status himself to be able to do away with their artistic conventions. In this respect, Ruthven writes that Pound had “learnt how to let himself be manipulated by the right people for his own benefit,” and that he “would now strengthen his position by manipulating others in the expectation of becoming the most powerful reputation broker in London” (Ruthven 52).

In the following years Pound would become more and more an autonomous producer, who would “exclude ‘bourgeois’ writers and artists,” whom he saw as “enemy agents,” in order “to impose the legitimate definition of art and literature” (Ruthven 41). Pound did not only attack those agents, but also fired directly at the institutions and values they represented. In his essay on “The Creation of the Avant-Garde,” Lawrence Rainey writes that the “Imagistes” are not a revolutionary school, compared to the Futurists (203). I already pointed out that Imagism as a school led by Pound, was revolutionary with respect to its poetics, but Pound’s articles in the *New Age* could also be addressed to prove that Imagism was also breaking grounds socially. Time after time Pound poked fun at the country in which he tried to make money. He criticized not only the established writers, but also government institutions. In his article “Through Alien Eyes” that was published in the *New Age* in 1913, for instance, Pound compared literature produced in London with “Rome of the decadence” and stated that the “finest authors” are all “foreigners” (“Yeats, James, Hudson, and Conrad”). Pound made fun of the House of Commons,

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MR. EZRA POUND.

Cartoon of Pound as a dandy in the
New Age, October 1913

identified respected authors Wells and Bennet with “a consummate vulgarity” and called the English “a nation of amateurs” (*New Age* Jan. 30, 1913).

Pound’s biographer David Moody writes that Orage, the then editor for the *New Age*, put up with all of Pound’s utterances, but “began to mount a counterattack in September 1913 when Pound declared ... that there were just two great and interesting phenomena in the world, ‘the intellectual life of Paris and the curious teething promise of my own vast occidental nation’” (211). Again Pound had made these remarks in Orage’s magazine the *New Age*, and apparently it had to stop. As I already mentioned, the *New Age* often published writers side by side with articles challenging their work. In September 1913 Orage published a series of articles by Beatrice Hastings, Orage’s lover and the self-described shadow co-editor of the journal between 1907 and 1914 (Ardin 408), “in tandem with Pound’s ‘Approach to Paris’ essays” (Ardin 415). These articles, written by Hasting and published under the pseudonym T.K.L., “evidence the rocky reception Pound’s ideas sometimes received in the *New Age*,” and were “sharply critical of Pound’s modernist precepts” (qtd. in Ardin 416). It appears that Orage enjoyed Pound’s controversial articles, since it gave him a reason to create polemic in the magazine. Did he allow Pound to publish in his magazine because of the value of the articles, or just to create sensation and sell journals? The articles published by his better half were often “outright attacks on modernist aesthetics and expositions of explicitly nonmodernist agendas for the arts” (Ardin 416). When Pound simply ignored Hasting’s attempts to outbalance him, Orage aggravated the dispute by stating that Pound is “ignorant of English writing, and ignorant even of how to write English” (qtd. in Moody 211). Moody argues that this was because of Pound’s critique on Milton and for his admiration of Yeats and Tagore. Pound became an enemy of the magazine that had been his main venue of publication, when Orage wrote in a later issue of the same year, under the pseudonym R.H.C., that “Mr. Pound -- I say it with all respect -- is an enemy of The New Age. His criticisms may not be [...] direct and personal, but by the oblique or the tacit, it is even more, in my view, inimical” he had fallen from grace (*New Age* Nov. 13, 1913). One can wonder, however, whether it was Orage who was fed up with the poet, or his lover Beatrice Hastings. If we are to believe Hastings’s autobiography, it was she who pulled the strings behind the scenes (Ardin 417).

Sadly enough, from that occurrence onwards Pound’s reputation for “brick-throwing” (Ruthven 66) would only develop further. Pound could only sit by and watch how his friend T.S.

Eliot would take his place as influential literary critic. Eliot was more diplomatic than Pound. He possessed the skill to voice his opinion with a certain finesse, instead of bashing into conventions. The establishment responded by “accommodating Eliot and rejecting Pound” (Ruthven 66).

2.2.3.2 *Poetry*

When dissensions arose between Orage and Pound, or I might even say between the English and Pound, he focused on his connections overseas. Disagreement with Pound’s views published in the *New Age* had been growing consistently, and the poet himself must have realized this as well. The importance of Harriet Monroe is already mentioned under chapter 2.2.2, but after his trouble with the *New Age* had grown to a climax, she became a ministering angel. Pound was unhappy with the literary world he lived in, and Monroe offered to change the climate. Good writers in London, Pound claimed, were a scarce item, and all the best literature had been written in Paris. He had called the established critics amateurs and openly stated that the editors of the magazines did not know “good work from bad, nor cared for poetry as a living and changing art” (Moody 212). On top of that, Pound did not think much higher of the work going on in America, until Harriet Monroe stood up and promised her magazine would be different. Everything that Pound desired for -- as he had stated in his articles --, *Poetry* magazine would fulfill. Her perception of poetry was that it was “the highest, most complete human expression of truth and beauty”⁸ (qtd. In Moody 212). She wanted to provide a center of “literary taste and authority” in the United States by paying poets for their work. She had “persuaded over one hundred citizens to pledge at least fifty dollars annually for five years” (Moody 213). *Poetry* magazine appears to have had both the spirit and the finances to achieve a legitimate position in the world of letters. Although Pound was rather suspicious about that kind of promises, he accepted the offer to become *Poetry*’s Foreign Correspondent. Pound would have his say in the magazine’s publications in the following years, but his influence would never be total. In a letter to Monroe Pound stated his idea of the policy.

We support American poets -- preferably the young ones who have a serious determination to produce master-work. We ‘import’ only such stuff as is better than that produced at home. The ‘best’ foreign stuff, the stuff well above mediocrity, or the

⁸ Drawn from Harriet Monroe’s circular letter to poets, as in “The Poetry Review” published in London Oct. 1912

experiments that seem serious, and seriously and sanely directed towards the broadening and development of the Art of Poetry⁹. (qtd. In Moody 214)

Pound was aiming for the best, as he always did. He started to believe in Monroe's intention and devoted his full attention to the magazine. Everything that was printed in *Poetry* that Pound disliked, he ran into the ground. Everything that was printed in *Poetry* that Pound had recommended, he praised. He introduced poems by Yeats, H.D., Aldington and as already mentioned above, most importantly, the Imagists. At the same time he also wrote essays in which he emphasized his view of the literary world in general. In "The Renaissance" for example, published in *Poetry* in May 1915, Pound harmed Milton when he wrote: "Chaucer should be on every man's shelf. Milton is the worst sort of poison. He is a thorough-going decadent in the worst sense of the term" ("Renaissance" 216). He restated the importance of the classics and basically summed up every writer one ought to have read and studied.

Pound's requirements of the magazine grew stronger and stronger, and it did not take long before he felt unhappy with the developments of the magazine, and wanted to resign from his position as Foreign Correspondent. Pound felt that Monroe was not restrictive enough when it came to the selection of published writers, and she did not care enough for "international prestige" as Pound desired. Monroe was a strong character, and often went against Pound's literary recommendations. When Pound realized that *Poetry* was not his magazine, but Monroe's, and that his input would never be total, he asked his friend Ford Madox Ford to take over. Ford wrote a letter to Monroe in which he politely refused, with the comment that

[I]f I tried to help you that energetic poet [Pound] would sit on my head and hammer me till I did exactly what he wanted and the result would be exactly the same except that I should be like the green baize door that every one kicks going in or out. (qtd in Moody 217)

Pound remained in his position of Foreign Correspondent in the hope that the quality of the magazine would improve. Consequently Monroe managed the magazine, and Pound kept complaining while he remained on as Foreign Correspondent for many years. Moody describes the cooperation as "a quarrel of two people in love with poetry and committed to putting it at the heart of things, but two people with such very different tastes, talents, and temperaments" (217).

In 1913 Pound was offered the post of Literary Editor of the *New Freewoman*, the little magazine later to be known as the *Egoist*. Pound accepted the offer and immediately set his

⁹ Ezra Pound to Harriet Monroe, Sept. 24 1912

stamp on the magazine. “He was taking it on as the official organ of Imagism” and by “mid-October he was ‘more or less running’ the review” (Moody 218). Pound already considered him the “guiding star” that chooses “about a third ... of the contents” (qtd. in Moody 218). Dora Marsden, the editor, however, had no intention of allowing him to do that. “When Rebecca West resigned in October, she quickly appointed Richard Aldington to her place, and thereafter Pound had no direct control of the contents of the *New Freewoman*” (Moody 218). In that brief period of time, the three months in which Pound was influential, he had managed to publish Joyce’s *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* in the little magazine.

3 *BLAST* and Vorticism

The above mentioned radicalization of both Pound’s market strategy and person, took place between 1913 and 1914. Since his arrival in London he had become more and more self-willed, a development which would culminate around 1914. In this respect, Michael Levenson speaks of “an abrupt change” that started in the autumn of 1913 (68). A possible explanation for the radicalization of Pound’s position might be his discovery of Allan Upwards’ “philosophy of egoism” (Wolfe 28). The study of that philosophy transformed Pound’s range of thought from “liberal humanism” into a “virulently anti-democratic elitist egoism” (Levenson 68). In his essay “The New Sculpture,” published in the *Egoist* in February 1914, Pound wrote that he had “dabbled in democracy and he is now done with that folly” (qtd. in Levenson 75). Wolfe considers Levenson’s argumentation plausible, but not cogent enough, and speaks of a “vacillation between the two positions.” She writes that Pound “would alternate between pronouncements which were both radically elitist and radically democratic” throughout his entire career (Wolfe 28). Apart from the context in which *BLAST* came to life, however, there are several other indications that show a clear radicalization of both Pound’s personality and his literary thoughts that endorse Levenson’s theory. With the creation of Imagism Pound had failed to create a popular movement with a large following, and on top of that he could not control his fellow-countrywoman Amy Lowell. Pound wanted her to “become a patron of his modernist movement in literature. He even offered her the editorship of the *Egoist*” (qtd. in Ruthven 107), which was not even his call to make. Lowell did not comply and wanted to be an Imagiste “independently of Pound, and for that she was never forgiven” (Ruthven 107). In 1914 Lowell wanted to publish an Imagisme anthology. Pound, unhappy with Lowell using the term he

coined, put forward alternative titles for the anthology in a letter he wrote on August 12. He suggested naming the anthology “*Vers Libre*” or if she really wants to use “Imagisme”, to use as subtitle “an anthology devoted to Imagisme, vers libre and modern movements in verse” (*Letters* 79). Amy Lowell ignored Pound’s letter, used the term Pound had coined and even asked Harriet Monroe to publish an advertisement in *Poetry*. Pound was furious and immediately wrote a letter to Monroe on October 12 asking her not to publish the advert. “As to Amy’s advertisement. It is, of course, comic. On the other hand, it is outrageous. ... STILL, for us to print it in *Poetry* is wrong, even if it does pay a few dollars” (*Letters* 84). On October 19, he wrote a letter to Amy Lowell on the same subject.

While you apologize to Richard [Aldington], your publishers, with true nonchalance, go on printing the ad in American papers which we would not see, save by unexpected accident. I think you had better cease referring to yourself as an Imagiste, more especially as *The Dome of Glass* certainly has no aspirations in our direction. I suppose you will really stop this ad sometime or other. Now that you have presented yourself to the ignorant in so favorable a light, it won’t so much matter. W.B.Y. [Yeats] was perhaps more amused than delighted. (*Letters* 85).

From then on, Pound would call her a “Hippopoetess,” although he would later claim that it was H.D. who coined that term, and wrote in a letter that there is no such thing as “equal suffrage in a republic of poesy” (qtd. in Ruthven 107). The climate was favorable to enforce a change, since Pound’s Imagism was more and more turning into “Amygism”.

In the Imagism period poems had been published under the same denominator, but they were unable to launch an artistic revolution, especially if the effect is compared to what Marinetti and the Futurist movement brought about. In 1921 Pound wrote a letter to Flint with the message that Imagism had been created to “coerce a few individuals into a semblance of unity for a few weeks or months, and to hold together till 1913” (qtd. in Moody 223). If that had been Pound’s sole intention, he had succeeded, since the group only broke up by 1914, and while Pound turned to Whyndam Lewis’ Vorticism, the others re-grouped around Amy Lowell. By turning to Lewis, Pound then tried to force a change in the field of restricted production, and again assumed the position of the newcomer in the field. Although the newcomer normally has very little specific capital, and Pound already possessed a great deal of symbolic capital, he adopted the role of revolutionary. The role of the newcomer is

to occupy a distinct, distinctive position, they must assert their difference, get it known and recognized, get themselves known and recognized (‘make a name for themselves’), by endeavoring to impose new modes of thought and expression, out of key with the

prevailing modes of thought and with the doxa, and therefore bound to disconcert the orthodox by their ‘obscurity’ and ‘pointlessness’. (Bourdieu 58)

This is what Pound did when he joined Wyndham Lewis in the creation of Vorticism and the literary magazine named *BLAST*. Pound’s message of the new movement was “a call for all true artists to rise up in rebellion against the oppression of the majority and their clichéd realism” (qtd. in Moody 253). In a lecture on the 22nd of January 1914 Pound, who was the third speaker after Hulme and Lewis, added his own emphasis when he quoted his friend Hulme that the artist “knows he is born to rule” and they “who have been so long the despised are about to take over” (qtd. in Moody 253). Pound’s pronouncements on art would be stronger than ever. He was moving “towards the economically most risky [position], [which would] secure no short-term economic profit” (Bourdieu 68), but he did not seem to care. He appeared more determined, elitist and more obstinate than ever. An artist who undertakes a certain approach is normally in possession of “substantial economic and social capital,” Bourdieu writes. Pound, however, was only in possession of the latter. He needed economic capital which would “provide the conditions for freedom from economic necessity.” The best option in this respect is a “private income” as one of “the best substitutes for sales” (Bourdieu 68). Because of the risk involved, it is usually those “richest in economic, cultural and social capital [who] are the first to move into the new positions” (Bourdieu 68). This shows how much of a daring entrepreneur Pound was. It always seemed to be that he took the biggest leaps when he was both economically and socially at his weakest. It is perhaps from that experience that he wrote in his article “The Renaissance” that “[h]unger -- some experience of it -- is doubtless good for a man” and “[i]n the end I believe in hunger, because it is an experience, and no artist can have too many experiences” (“Renaissance” 221).

The above mentioned article “The Renaissance” went hand in hand with the Vorticist uprising. Apart from its recommendations of the classics, the article also contains a short chapter on the economy of the artistic world. The problem according to Pound was still the one he had identified a couple of years prior. The situation was that only “slavish repetition of formulae being rewarded by a commodity system which found experiment and invention too risky for investment” (Wolfe 30). This is what Bourdieu means when he speaks of the “short-term economic profit” (68). The art produced by newcomers or even by the consecrated avant-garde may be profitable in the long run, but that did not help the producing artist in his fight to survive

in the early stages of their career. The contradiction that arises, however, is that in order to produce good art, the artist cannot take part of the money economy, but they cannot live without it either. Pound said that “[y]ou cannot [...] be a good artist and a good capitalist subject at the same time” (qtd. in Wolfe 30). The result was that almost all creative and inventive artists lived in poverty. In “Patria Mia” Pound had already proposed “a system of patronage as the only means by which the artist might be free enough from the law of the commodity long enough to achieve something which might outlast its economic context” (Wolfe 31). In “The Renaissance” Pound reaffirmed that suggestion, and with his growing influence in the United States chances of success seemed higher. Again England was the culprit, and France was presented as an example.

France recognizes the cash value of artists. They do not have to pay taxes save when convenient; they have a ministry of fine arts doing its semi-efficient best. Literary but inartistic England moves with a slow paw pushing occasional chunks of meat towards the favored. England does as well as can be expected, considering that the management of such affairs is entrusted to men whose interests are wholly political and who have no sort of intuition or taste. That is to say, in England, if someone of good social position says that your work is ‘really literary,’ and that you are not likely to attack the hereditary interests or criticize the Albert Memorial, you can be reasonably sure of a pension. (“Renaissance” 222)

England rejects all innovating art, while France recognizes that “all good art, goes against the grain of contemporary taste” (“Renaissance” 222). Pound criticized that money is given to professors and preachers but not to creators, artists. Therefore, he openly addressed rich private people¹⁰ to step in, and support the creative artists, since their support is indispensable for art and artists to group and “become a great period” (“Renaissance” 221).

Great art does not depend upon comfort, it does not depend upon the support of riches. But a great age is brought about only with the aid of wealth, because a great age means the deliberate fostering of genius, the gathering-in and grouping and encouragement of artists. (“Renaissance” 221)

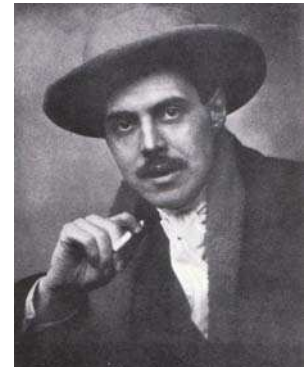
Pound wanted support from wealthy Americans for young artists so they could bridge the first hard years of their career, before their work would turn profitable. He also pleaded for the creation of “a college of the arts in New York or San Francisco where the young artist might be housed and fed during” those first years (qtd. in Wolfe 33). A year later Pound wrote a letter to John Quinn, the New York lawyer he had met during his trip overseas in 1910. Quinn was the patron of Yeats’s father back then, so he seemed perfect for Pound’s new project. In his letter to

¹⁰ Pound mentions Mr. Rockefeller, owner of Standard Oil Company, as first.

Quinn, Pound wrote that “[i]f a patron buys from an artist who needs money (needs money to buy tools, time and food), the patron then makes himself equal to the artist: he is building art into the world, he creates....” (qtd. in Kenner 280). Quinn agreed to help Pound and the Vorticists and bought Gaudiers¹¹, Lewises, and “offered the *Egoist* money to improve it, but the editors rejected “a Poundian incursion”. Quinn later suggested printing a third issue of *BLAST*, and when that did not come through, he bought space in the *Egoist* and the *Little Review*. Quinn supported Eliot, Joyce, Lewis, Ford and “whoever Pound could recruit,” and they would all “appear in the *Little Review*” (Kenner 281).

3.1.1.1 Wyndham Lewis and the Field of Restricted Blasting Production

In 1913 it came to Pound’s notice that Lewis had plans to organize a new movement and start up a literary magazine. Pound immediately wrote a letter to Joyce to inform him that Lewis was “starting a new Futurist, Cubist, Imagiste Quarterly. ... mostly a painter’s magazine with me [Pound] to do the poems” (qtd. in Kenner 236). When the full-page advertisement for *BLAST* was printed in the *Egoist* in the April 1 and April 15 edition of 1914, it announced “discussion of Cubism, Futurism, Imagisme and all Vital Forms of Modern Art” (qtd. in Kenner



Wyndham Lewis

237). Vorticism was yet to be born then. Pound was disillusioned about the talent and enthusiasm his fellow Imagist writers had shown, and he turned to avant-garde painters and sculptors in London. The desired drive and spirit which he missed in Imagism, he found in sculptors like Gaudier-Brzeska and Jacob Epstein, whom he would later praise in his “Affirmations” series. These artists were truly revolutionary in sculpture, much more than the poets of the Imagist School were in poetry. It was Epstein who had directed Pound’s critical eye to Wyndham Lewis’s drawings, which made a profound impression on Pound. Moreover, Lewis had the same stunning drive Pound had, and together they would “sweep out the past century as surely as Attila swept across Europe” (qtd. in Moody 237). Pound’s elitist attitude showed clearly when he stated in the same article¹²: “Damn the man in the street, once and for all, damn the man in the

¹¹ Henri Gaudier-Brzeska was a French sculptor who joined the Vorticist movement in London briefly before the first World War.

¹² Originally printed in the *Egoist* June 15, 1914.

street who is only in the street because he hasn't intelligence enough to be let in anywhere else...." (qtd. in Wees 57).

Originally the artists of the new movement including Lewis, Gaudier-Brzeska and Epstein were labeled "English Cubists," and *BLAST*'s initial intension was to promote the "new Cubist art in England" (qtd. in Wees 62). Under the influence of Pound, however, Lewis changed his attitude towards Cubism and especially towards Futurism. Another reason for the growing aversion to Futurism was the departure of the co-founder of the first minute, C.R.W. Nevinson, an English Futurist painter. At the last minute he decided to support Futurism and Marinetti instead of the Lewis group, which made Lewis the "sole editor" (qtd. in Wees 1965: 62). The reason for Nevinson's leaving might have been "a quarrel" with Lewis that resulted from a discussion on Futurism at one of the meetings held in Lewis's London studio. Pound and Lewis had gathered a group of people to compile "lists of persons who should be blasted and of others who should be blessed" (qtd. in Wees 1965: 62). Nevinson did not comply with the hard-hearted attitude and left. The result of this was that Pound's influence in the movement grew concomitantly. Pound contacted Harriet Monroe, and in the July edition of *Poetry*, the *BLAST* advert that had earlier appeared in the *Egoist* April editions was printed. Vorticism, however, was not yet mentioned and the advert printed in *Poetry* in July still announced that the magazine would be ready in April, although it was already due. In the August edition of *Poetry* a new advertisement was printed with the content of the first issue of *BLAST*. The subtitle, however, still read "Discussion of Cubism, Futurism, Imagisme and all Vital Forms of Modern Art" (*Poetry* Aug. 1914: 44) instead of its actual subtitle: the "Review of the Great English Vortex".

With Nevinson's exit one might have expected to find direct references to Vorticism and none to Cubism and especially Futurism. The absence of Vorticism publicity can be attributed to the slow communication of the time, but that does not seem to be the case. Pound wrote to Monroe on a regular basis, sometimes several letters a month (*Letters* 76), so there must have been another reason for the delay of the reference to Vorticism in *Poetry*. Not throwing overboard the terms Futurism and Cubism before the publication of the first edition of *BLAST* may have been a tactical maneuver. Both movements were extremely popular at the time, so their importance could be manipulated to boost the Vorticist movement. Another reason could be that the term Vorticism as the name of the movement was not invented yet, since it was mentioned only once in the first issue of *BLAST*, and the emphasis was still on the Vortex. It

seems that although Pound had already converted his recently adapted Vortex term into an -ism, he waited until after the publication of *BLAST* to create the movement, the Vorticist School. This theory would explain why the first mention of Vorticism in *Poetry* is only to be found in the October edition.

Lewis's art had been described as both Cubist and Futurist, but the significance and originality was overshadowed by Marinetti's grandiloquent conquest of London and Paris. Pound had experienced similar problems with the Italian innovator, and seemed the perfect ally for Lewis to create a countering English movement. Schneideau writes that even in Pound's "most positive statement" about Futurism he maintained a "certain clear reservation" (219). The statement Schneideau refers to is part of a review Pound wrote for *Poetry* magazine in the February 1913 edition which reads:

Whatever may be said against automobiles and aeroplanes and the modernist way of speaking of them, and however much one may argue that this new sort of work is mannered, and that its style will pass, still it is indisputable that the vitality of the time exists in such work. (*Poetry* Feb. 1913: 156-166)

This is one of the rare occasions in which Pound did not directly attack Marinetti or Futurism, the movement which aspired to tear down the poet's most beloved town, Venice. Futurism wanted to "pull down its palaces and replace them with modern factories" (*NY Times* July 24, 1910). Still in 1913 Pound was further developing the modernization of art, which had commenced when he founded Imagism a year earlier. In contrast to Marinetti, Pound pleaded for modernization without sacrificing the ancient tradition. The Futurists denied tradition completely, and that would form the major contrast with the Vorticists under Pound's influence. "Futurism was a nihilistic doctrine, preaching the demolition of the past and the glorification of the Age of Machines. [...] The Futurists hated museums, libraries, ruins, and history" (Schneideau 219). Pound and the Vorticist movement incorporated tradition in the modernization of art. They revived the ancient in their paintings, sculptures and poems.

The infusion of this conservative habit into Vorticism saved it, and perhaps the modernist tradition as a whole, from rootless nihilism and the sentimentalizing of a mechanized future that makes Futurist art today seem so quaint and dated. (Schneideau 220)

Futurism may be "quaint and dated" today; it is still much more well-known than Vorticism. Although the modernist movement in general had a huge impact on the art world, this cannot be said of Vorticism. Schneideau writes that Vorticism "failed dismally" and that "it left no

permanent traces on Western styles of art, as did Cubism” (214). Lawrence Rainey shares this viewpoint and takes it one step further by mocking the magazine that started everything, *BLAST*, in his essay on “The Creation of the Avant-Garde;” more on this in chapter 3.1.1.3.

In 1914 the tide was right for both Pound and Lewis to launch their movement. Pound had recently been successful with his volume of poems *Ripostes*¹³ and Lewis’s *Timon of Athens* series, a portfolio illustrating the famous Shakespeare play, received a warm welcome. The fact that Pound was done with Imagism is proved in the letter he wrote to artist Gladys Hynes in 1956. He wrote that “Miss Lowell was trying to break down the definition of Imagism by omitting the most vital proposition in the original definition, [so] it was opportune to get another label for vitality in the arts” (qtd. in Wees 1966: 211). In the same letter Pound commented on the coming about of the new movement:

W[yndham] L[ewis] certainly made vorticism. To him alone we owe the existence of *BLAST*. It is true that he started by wanting a forum for the several ACTIVE varieties of CONTEMPORARY art/ cub/ expressionist/ post-imp etc. BUT in conversation with E.P. there emerged the idea of defining what we wanted/ & having a name for it. Ultimately Gaudier for sculpture, E.P. for poetry, and W.L., the main mover, set down their personal requirements. (qtd. in Wees 1966: 211)

The way in which Pound, E.P., speaks of himself in the third person, as if being of royal blood, exemplifies the importance he gave to his persona. It might also be an indication of the strict boundary Marcel Proust indicated between the poetic persona and the practical persona. The author as a writer has to be distinguished from the author as a social living creature. The literary work is the product of the first, and has nothing to do with the latter. Proust writes that

un livre est le produit d’un autre moi que celui que nous manifestons dans nos habitudes, dans la société, dans nos vices. Ce moi-là, si nous voulons essayer de le comprendre, c’est au fond de nous-même, en essayant de le recréer en nous, que nous pouvons y parvenir. (Proust 221-222)

Following Proust’s view, it was Ezra Loomis Pound, the man, who controlled E.P. the poet, like a puppeteer mastering a glove puppet. Pound, the living creature, created a character that capered around from time to time looking for fresh fields. He was “willing to write for anybody on practically anything [and] ... aimed at colonizing the maximum amount of discursive space both *in propria persona* and by means of a variety of pseudonyms” (Ruthven 74). The *propria persona* was the leading character in Pound’s puppet show, and the supporting parts were filled

¹³ Published by Stephen Swift and Co., LTD. in 1912.

in by pseudonyms like Alfred Venison or “Bastien von Helmholtz, author of an essay in the *Egoist*, as Ezra Pound in disguise” (qtd. in Lan 80). The drive to co-operate in setting out a new movement around 1914 can be placed in this context. The poetic persona was moving on from Imagism, and a new incentive was needed to sustain the persona’s authority.

I already mentioned the lack of widespread success of the Imagist School and the clash with Amy Lowell (chapter 2.2.1), but there were additional factors that further explain Pound’s break with Imagism. One was that Pound wanted a “more virile company” than the Imagists offered him, and a second was that he aimed at poetry “on a larger scale” in contrast to the “short, Imagist lyrics” (qtd. in Wees 1965: 61). It was a combination of the value of the artistic movement in terms of symbolic capital in the field of literary production, and a desire to explore and shape the form of poetry further, that pushed the poet in the direction of Wyndham Lewis. Pound desired an aesthetic based on “objectivity and impersonality” (qtd. in Wees 1965: 61), and strived for an absolute “separation between art and the event” (Kenner 276). In his famous essay, “Tradition and the Individual Talent,” Eliot described the new poetic goal as follows:

Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality. But, of course, only those who have personality and emotions know what it means to want to escape from these things. (Eliot 1920: 52-53)

When Pound had convinced Lewis of the idea to set out a completely new movement, rather than becoming Cubist or Futurist followers, the theater of war had to be chalked out. Dissatisfied with Lowell’s involvement in *his* school, and the still dominating presence of Marinetti, Pound would aim for a radical outburst. The poet was obsessed with being on top of things and “practiced monopoly-breaking in order to set up a monopoly of his own” (Ruthven 74). The new movement would break with the public of non-producers, “the non-intellectual fraction of the dominant class,” and would become an objectively producing system (Bourdieu 115). When a certain field of restricted production is set out, one that makes no “reference to external demands,” the conditions “for its acceptance outside the field” tend to “nullify” (Bourdieu 119). But with a program that was not attractive to the outside world, what could Lewis and Pound’s exact objective with the movement have been?

The Vorticists proclaimed themselves absolutely without party and dissociated themselves from any reformist program whatsoever. Indeed, *BLAST*’s proudest boast was that the Vorticists were ‘mercenaries’ who fought, not for a cause, but for the sheer joy of

fighting. ... They claimed no allies, and their most manic attacks were against those who might indulgently tolerate them. (Schneideau 215)

The original intention would afterwards always be described as “a great lark” (Kenner 244), but it is arguable that both Pound and Lewis had more serious intentions. Marinetti’s 1909 manifesto carried the same aggressive message, and had been a roaring success. It applauded “strife” and stated that the Futurists wished to “glorify War -- the only health giver of the world -- militarism, patriotism, the destructive arm of the Anarchist, the beautiful Ideas that kill, the contempt for women” (qtd. in Schneideau 219). Although Marinetti’s message was aggressively assertive, it was a success. *BLAST*, however, was considered to be a decoction by many, and whatever Pound and Lewis’s intention may have been, they cannot have desired to be looked upon as Futurist epigones. It appears that they aspired to become the English variant of Marinetti’s movement, but whether its sole intention was mockery and parody, or whether they secretly cherished high hopes of receiving an equally thunderous applause, we can only guess at.

Leaving the reception of *BLAST* and Vorticism aside for the moment -- this will be discussed under 3.1.1.3 -- I will focus on the objective of the movement first. The plan had everything it takes to form both an autonomous movement and an independent field of restricted production. This “degree of autonomy” is “measurable by the degree to which it is capable of functioning as a specific market, generating a specifically cultural type of scarcity” (Bourdieu 119). Although Vorticism may show similarities with Cubism and Futurism, it carried enough dissimilarity in its program to form a separate movement. The intelligibility of the created works were bound “to remain unintelligible to those [people] not sufficiently integrated into the producers’ field” (Bourdieu 116). Moreover, the value of the goods disregarded the economic market conditions. As mentioned earlier, Pound had addressed Quinn for financial support of the movement. “The trick was to turn collectors into patrons by luring them away from a consumerism of safe investments in the celebrated dead, and to get them instead to sponsor the next generation of masterpieces” (Ruthven 94). This new kind of financial support created room for artistic creativity with the intention of obtaining more cultural legitimacy. The value of a cultural good was not assessed by its value in any external field, but only measured by its “cultural pertinent features” (Bourdieu 117) in relation to the prescribed standards of the restricted field and in comparison with other works produced in that field.

3.1.1.2 The Vortex

The idea of the Vortex surfaced for the first time in one of Pound's articles in the "Osiris" series, printed in the *New Age* early 1912, when the poet wrote:

This peculiar energy which fills the cones is the power of tradition, of centuries of race consciousness, of agreement, of association; and the control of it is the "Technique of Content," which nothing short of genius understands.



Symbol of the Vortex

This description of the vortex is linked to tradition. It was only in June 1914, however, just before *BLAST* would go into print, that Pound came to think of the term as "a metaphor for form-creating force," and the vortex was transformed into an -ism. The name became a movement with the intention to induce "all the power of tradition ... into its armory forces" (Schneideau 223). In 1913 Pound had already compared London to the vortex, "drawing strength from its peripheries" (Kenner 238). The naming of the new movement was the finishing touch, and although Lewis's paintings resembled Cubism and Futurism, they were something different, and they needed an individual title. "Lewis got beyond Cubism" (Kenner 236), because his art was not "indifferent to personality," and it was not Futuristic since it did not deny tradition (Kenner 238). "Cubism [and] Futurism ... came reasonably close, but Vorticism was *le mot juste*" (Kenner 238).

With the publication of *BLAST* on June 20, 1914, the Vortex was born with the opening words of the magazine reading: "Long Live the Vortex!" and "Long live the great art vortex sprung up in the centre of this town!" London was the vortex and the Vortex was London. The possible link with Futurism was immediately refuted by stating on the opening pages of the magazine that Vorticists "do not want to make people wear Futurist Patches, or fuss men to take to pink and sky-blue trousers" ("Long Live the Vortex" 9), and

AUTOMOBILISM (Marinetteism) bores us. We don't want to go about making a hulloobulloo about motor cars, anymore than about knives and forks, elephants or gas-pipes. Elephants are VERY BIG. Motor cars go quickly" ("Long Live the Vortex" 10).

Even in his personal vortex Pound bashed Futurism after he explained the energy created by "the turbine."

All experience rushes into this vortex. All the energized past, all the past that is living and worthy to live. All MOMENTUM, which is the past bearing upon us, RACE, RACE-MEMORY, instinct charging the PLACID, NON-ENERGIZED FUTURE. ... Futurism

is the disgorging spray of a vortex with no drive behind it, DISPERSAL. ("Vortex. Pound." 153)

The past is connected to the future in the vortex. The vital essence Pound had found in Villon, Chaucer, Daniel, and Confucius was incorporated in personalized modern art. Futurism banned all those masterful influences from their program, but to Pound the tradition was indispensable for creating true art. Several of the original Imagist ideas were transformed and incorporated in the Vortex. In an essay titled "Vorticism," printed in the *Fortnightly Review* in September 1914 and in *Gaudier-Brzeska: A Memoir* in 1916, Pound wrote that "the Image is not an idea. It is a radiant node or cluster; it is what I can, and must perforce, call a VORTEX, from which, and through which, and into which, ideas are constantly rushing" (*Gaudier-Brzeska* 92). Schneideau compares the fixed "shape of a vortex" to the fixed relationships of the ideas rushing through the Image (222). Related to the Image is the concept of mimicry. Pound made clear in the Imagism period that exact similarity or mere representation is not the intention of the Image. The Image must be a positively charged body via which poles the energy flows over into the perception. The purity of the image is of the utmost importance, and the Vortex resisted all elaboration and "secondary applications" ("Vortex. Pound." 154). In his famous "A few Don'ts by an Imagiste" Pound had already stated that "[a]n Image is that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time" ("Vortex. Pound." 154). Again Pound's "In a station of the metro" is the best example to explain this concept. In his essay in the *Fortnightly Review* Pound gave an accurate description and explanation of the coming into being of the poem. I quote at length because it is probably the best and most lucid explanation Pound ever gave to his idea of the energy and emotion incarcerated in the Image.

Three years ago in Paris I got out of a "metro" train at La Concorde, and saw suddenly a beautiful face, and then another and another, and then a beautiful child's face, and then another beautiful woman, and I tried all that day to find words for what this had meant to me, and I could not find any words that seemed to me worthy, or as lovely as that sudden emotion. And that evening, as I went home along the Rue Raynouard, I was still trying, and I found, suddenly, the expression. I do not mean that I found words, but there came an equation ... not in speech, but in little spots of colour. It was just that -- a "pattern," or hardly a pattern, if by "pattern" you mean something with a "repeat" in it. But it was a word, the beginning, for me, of a language in colour. I do not mean that I was unfamiliar with the kindergarten stories about colours being like tones in music. I think that sort of thing is nonsense. If you try to make notes permanently correspond with particular colours, it is like tying narrow meanings to symbols. ... That evening, in the Rue Raynouard, I realised quite vividly that if I were a painter, or if I had, often, that kind of emotion, or even if I had the energy to get paints and brushes and keep at it, I might

found a new school of painting, of "non-representative" painting, a painting that would speak only by arrangements in colour. (*Gaudier-Brzeska* 87)

The new school became Vorticism, and although it was mainly a movement of painting and sculpture, with Lewis, Brzeska and Epstein as forerunners, poetry completed the circle. The poem was originally thirty lines long, but Pound destroyed it because it was a work of "second intensity" (*Gaudier-Brzeska* 89). It had to be a poem that relied upon "similarity or analogy," or upon "likeness or mimicry," an idea the Vorticists repudiated ("Vortex. Pound." 154). Six months later Pound wrote a poem of about fifteen lines, but still he was not satisfied, and it took him another year of pondering before he realized how to convey the accurate emotion and energy he had experienced that day in Paris. It took no more than a mould of two lines to transform the memorable impression into a memorable poem.

The apparition of these faces in the crowd
Petals on a wet, black bough .¹⁴

Bourdieu's definition of pure poetry in the field of restricted production is a very accurate description of the kind of poetry Pound aspired to in the Vortex. "Pure poetry appears as the conscious and methodical application of a system of explicit principles which were at work, though only in a diffuse manner, in earlier writings" (Bourdieu 119). These "earlier writings" are tradition, and need to be combined with new poetic conceptions in order to create good poetry. The poet who is influenced by tradition should not merely be a ruminant, but should create new material without neglecting what one has learned from former masters. The most "specific effects" of the new production ought to be "derived from games of suspense and surprise, from the consecrated betrayal of expectations," and using neither "archaisms" nor "syntactic dissonances" (Bourdieu 119). It is only when the newly formed restricted field of cultural production complies with those terms, that it can call itself such a field.

¹⁴ This is the original typeset adopted from how "In a Station of the Metro" was printed in the April 1913 edition of *Poetry* magazine.

Wyndham Lewis's painting "Alcibiades," from his *Timon* series, demonstrated that the newborn movement was independent and that it met the conditions of the field of restricted production as set out by Bourdieu. This painting encompasses the whole Vortex idea, it basically breathes energy. Kenner writes that "[t]he calmest things on which Lewis lets the eye rest are a bowl and a carafe, and these are enclosed in an equivocal semicircular space whose perspective snaps in and out at whim; [t]hey are cubist props, relegated to accessory status" (234). You might say that Lewis took Cubism to a higher level in this painting. While Cubism presented objects such as a musical instrument or the bottom of a chair in a serene environment, and in harmony with the humans in the painting -- if there were any humans depicted at all -- (Picasso's "Woman playing the mandolin" for example), Lewis used a still-life in combination with energetic moving men. The energy in Lewis's painting is transmitted through "lightning, clouds, spears, posturing figures, Renaissance helmets, a pneumatic woman, a screaming head," and they are all "fixed in a slow-motion explosion whose next centimeter's expansion will occupy all eternity" (Kenner 234). The explicit perspective forms another clear difference with a typical Cubist painting, in which perspective was often flattened. The power in the painting is created in the abundant diagonals, which are found in the incidence of light and the hard edges in the background. Lewis's entire *Timon* depictions linked the energies of his age, with the Renaissance of Italy.

The movement had the products to form an independent group, pleaded for internationalism and embodied the English variant of the new abstract art. Cubism was Parisian and Futurism was Italian, but Vorticism presented itself as a movement without boundaries looking to a future without "locale" (Kenner 238). The works the Vorticists produced are



"Alcibiades" by Wyndham Lewis

“‘pure’, ‘abstract’ and ‘esoteric’. First, they are ‘pure’ because they demand of the receiver a

specifically aesthetic disposition in accordance with the principles of their production” (Bourdieu 120), which is one of the vital elements to create a field of restricted production. The Vorticists refused to allow established artists into their circle, and at the same time refused to create art which the establishment might taste. Second, the “multiplicity” of their “specific approaches,” (Bourdieu 120) by incorporating both the tradition and their conception of the new into their various art forms, made their art “abstract”. And thirdly, their art was “esoteric” because it was only “accessible ... to those who [possessed] practical or theoretical mastery of a refined code, of successive codes, and of the code of these codes” (Bourdieu 120).

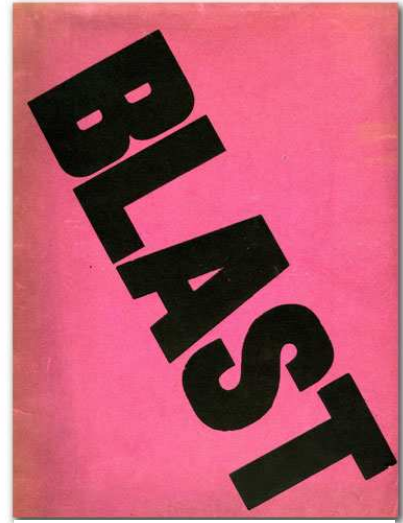
Creating a perfect theoretical framework of a field of restricted production, however, is only the preliminary of the eventual creation of the artistic movement. Lewis was perfect for creating the intrinsic qualities of the movement. In his letter to Gladys Hynes, as mentioned in chapter 3.1.1.1, Pound acknowledged that it was Lewis who had made Vorticism and *BLAST*. Pound, on the other hand, created the extrinsic qualities of the movement. He was the literary promoter, the critic, who mastered the skill of persuasion like no other. It was his task to turn the painting as a material product into a symbolic good. When a painter produces and sells a painting, it is out of his hands. “Expensive resales profit only the resellers” (Kenner 240). Therefore Pound had to create a name “in which the potential purchaser, who literally cannot *see* a picture, might yet buy shares if it proved its staying power (‘A little Vorticist thing for the pantry wall’)” (Kenner 241). Pound had to create a name which would represent symbolic capital that might turn into economic capital in the long run. The cult-figure in Pound could play his favorite trump and “sent out advertisements for *BLAST* and provided Lewis with a long list of potential subscribers” (Wees 1965: 62). Pound would ensure reviews in magazines and newspapers, and would keep Vorticism alive by writing numerous articles on both the artists and the artistic movement for little magazines. The article entitled “Vorticism” that appeared in the *Fortnightly Review* on September 1, 1914 was one of the earliest post-*BLAST* publicity. His columns in the *New Age* were an even greater endorsement. The explanation of Vorticism, and especially the “Affirmations” series¹⁵ in which he praised Epstein and Gaudier-Brzeska alongside of his great example Arnaut Daniel, were an attempt to boost the movement’s and magazine’s name and fame.

¹⁵ Published in the *New Age* between January and February 1915.

3.1.1.3 *BLAST* : The Magazine

Pound's increasing radicalness, intractability and elitism showed not only in his engagement for the Vorticist movement, but most clearly in his writings in the first issue of *BLAST*. The magazine was the outlet of the poet's new range of thought: Bigger, Louder, Harder.

With a brilliant heliotrope cover and the single word, *Blast*, in huge block letters slashing diagonally across the front and back covers, the Vorticists' magazine was intended, first of all, to make the new movement noticed. 'The large type and the flaring cover are merely bright plumage,' said Pound. (Wees 1965: 63)



Cover of the 1st issue of *BLAST*

In the manifesto everything that was related to the English establishment was damned, alongside with frivolous cursing of the most unthinkable trivialities. There is basically no organ or individual that was not *blasted* in the manifesto, and although all the serious ideas of the movement were also implicitly expressed in the manifesto, the strength of the message was to be found in the typeset. "The Vorticists consistently [attacked] mildness, softness, compromise, nature, the nineteenth century, education, democracy, ... and what, in general, they [called] 'Romanticism'." "In contrast, they [admired] harshness, extremes, violence, the present" and all the other opposites of what they [hated] (Wees 1965: 64). The characters of the manifesto presented the image of the magazine and the movement: bombastic and aggressive. "*BLAST* [expressed] visually, in its typography, layout and illustrations, the same attitudes it [presented] in words" (Wees 1965: 65). The "new Poundian persona," which Wees calls a "combined enfant terrible and moral satirist" was presented in the poems he wrote for *BLAST*. In "Salutation the Third," for example, he used his image of enfant terrible to provoke the audience. It is as if the poet desired to be disliked and tried his very best to be as controversial as possible.

BUT I will not go mad to please you.
I will not FLATTER you with an early death.
OH, NO ! I will stick it out,
I will feel your hates wriggling about my feet,
And I will laugh at you and mock you,

The other poems of Pound's hand in *BLAST* speak the same language, and in "Fratres Minores" three lines were actually crossed out with a black felt-tip. The "dry, hard, Imagist decorum" was a thing of the past and had been replaced by "a totally new tone, sometimes angry and moralizing, sometimes satirical, but certainly more declamatory, more 'rhetorical' than Imagist doctrine allowed" (Wees 1965: 59). Pound proclaimed the Vorticist movement and *BLAST* as being authoritative, and he took no account of the reception of the magazine and the opinion of outsiders.

This kind of attitude usually arises after the specific field of restricted production has gained in autonomy, but Pound seemed to think of the Vorticists as "intellectuals or artists by divine right, as creators," before the magazine was even published. Pound and his associates acted "as *auctores* claiming authority by virtue of their charisma and attempting to impose an *auctoritas* that [recognized] no other principle of legitimation than itself" (Bourdieu 124).

The reception of *BLAST* was very divergent, and so are present day scholars' opinions of it. Wees writes that the reception varied from "easy, Philistine dismissal in such places as the London *Morning Post*, the New York *Times*, and Stephen Philip's *Poetry Review*, to serious, but puzzled admiration in *Poetry* magazine, the *Little Review*, and the *Egoist*" (65). In its October edition, *Poetry* magazine called Vorticism "the latest official title of the latest literary and artistic revolution in England, and *Blast*, a quarterly published by John Lane, with a bright cerise cover that makes one feel as if the outer cuticle had been removed, is its official organ" (*Poetry* Oct. 1914: 44). The

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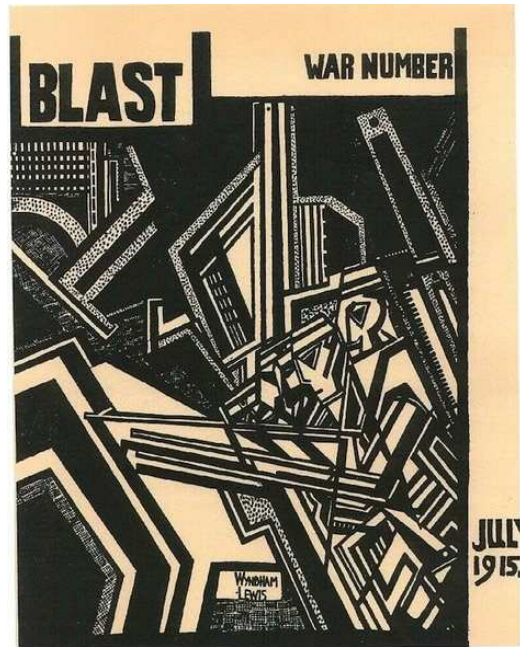
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rest of the review is extremely positive and is written in a Poundian tone. Since Pound was close with Harriet Monroe, and had a great deal of influence in the magazine, the objectivity of the review may be called into question. The Poundian undertone is especially apparent when the reviewer writes that “the quarterly represents the height of sophistication,” and that “it is only those who are, if possible, more sophisticated who will find about *Blast* something of the wan excitement of Fourth of July Fireworks on the day after the Fourth” (*Poetry* Oct. 1914: 45). The level of intelligence needed in order to appreciate and understand *BLAST* is stressed by Pound in the second



Cover of the 2nd edition of *BLAST*

edition of the magazine, when he wrote: “Throughout the length and breadth of England and through three continents *BLAST* has been REVEILED by all save the intelligent” (“Chronicles” 85). The reason for the disapproval of *BLAST*, according to Pound, was because the magazine was not afraid “to show modernity its face in an honest glass” (“Chronicles” 85) and “present the actual discords of modern ‘civilization’” (“Chronicles” 86).

Opinions of contemporary scholars are also divergent. Wees is rather positive when he writes that *Blast* was “widely discussed” and that it had at least some “fleeting fame” (1965: 65). Rainey, on the other hand, is far less positive. According to him “Imagism was an intellectual failure” and *BLAST* an even bigger disappointment. He writes that the “lack of critical and public acceptance is revealing,” and no matter what “later critics have suggested, contemporary critics were neither angered nor provoked by *Blast*.” He continues that “they were simply bored, and bored not because *Blast* was an incomprehensible novelty, but because it was all too familiar” (210). To endorse his statement, Rainey quotes a review that appeared in the *New Statesman* on July 4, 1914 in which *BLAST* is called a “Flat affair” and “a feeble attempt at being clever” (qtd. in Rainey 210). The following edition of the *New Statesman* compared Vorticism with what the movement tried to oppose, Futurism: “But, after all, what is Vorticism but Futurism in an English disguise--Futurism, we might call it, bottled in England, and bottled badly? ...the two groups differ from each other not in their aims, but in their degrees of competence” (qtd. in

Rainey 220). Rainey states that Pound's "attempt to address and provoke an audience through a programmatic polemical onslaught had proved a conspicuous failure." He continues by claiming that it was not just an "aesthetic" failure, but also an "economic" one (210). He quotes Wyndham Lewis, who said that he "did not sell a single picture" (qtd. in Rainey 210) in the face of Pound's activities, to endorse his statements.

I, however, do not agree with Rainey. Because, if Pound's contemporaries were "neither angered nor provoked" by *BLAST*, then why was Pound banned from the *Quarterly Review* and boycotted by the establishment (Kenner 244)? And why did it harm his career so severely in the following years? Pound was boycotted, and Kenner calls this "the ultimate weapon," since it "implied starvation" to "men who lived on what they could pick up from articles and reviews" (244). It hurt Pound not only financially, but also mentally.

In order to avoid the same dire fate, Eliot never held any "official connections with the Vorticists" (Schneideau 223), for the same reason the editor of the *Quarterly Review*, G.W. Prothero, stayed away from the movement: "It stamps a man too disadvantageously" (qtd. in Kenner 244). Still, Eliot proposed to Harriet Monroe to "write an article on Pound's Vorticist theories," and in 1917 *Ezra Pound: His Metric and Poetry* was published. It was Pound himself who told Quinn that the pamphlet ought to be published "either pseudonymously 'with a nom-de-swank' or simply anonymously" (Ruthven 144). While Pound seemed to enjoy wallowing in the mud, he acknowledged that he was a dangerous man to be involved with. Eliot's pamphlet was eventually published anonymously, "for the sake of [Eliot's] entrée into circles where Pound was anathema" (Schneideau 224).

After *BLAST*, Pound's position deteriorated gradually, and the role of the big literary critic slowly slid into Eliot's hands. Eliot "took over the assistant literary editorship of the *Egoist*," and after some troublesome years Pound would turn to the *Little Review* in March 1917 (Schneideau 224). The two kept working together closely and were both down on Amygists, *vers libre*, Futurism and "all those who, as Pound put it, were 'degrading the values,' but especially those who professed a narrow, insular idea of tradition" (Schneideau 224). The idea that Pound is often seen as the inventor and Eliot as the master is reflected in this post-*BLAST* period. The two referred to each other's publications in the magazines they wrote for, and so when Eliot put forth "Tradition and the Individual Talent" in 1919, Schneideau indicates that "it is hard to believe that Pound was not consulted" (224).

3.1.1.4 “Affirmations” and Gaudier-Brzeska

Pound did everything in his power to promote the magazine and the movement. He found his way back to the *New Age* and published a series of essays titled “Affirmations” in 1915. After his previous collisions with Orage, however, terms were strict. Orage no longer had the intention to print pieces he disliked, although he had done so in the past, and refused one of Pound’s “Affirmations” articles (Moody 263). Orage’s other half, Beatrice Hastings, would attack Pound once again, fifteen months after her previous strike. With Pound’s “Affirmations” series only partly published, Orage published her response under the pseudonym Alice Morning:

I almost was about to believe while reading his article, “Affirmations,” that Mr. Ezra Pound was about to wake up. But he sank quietly deeper on the pillow in his final paragraph, which is only an affirmation that he is a hopeless cultist. (*New Age* January 21, 1915)

A hopeless cultist or not, Pound praised the artists whose talent he admired. The “Affirmations” series started with the appraisal of Arnold Dolmetsch, a French-born musician and historic instruments maker. What Dolmetsch was doing at the time fitted the Vorticist idea of incorporating tradition into modern day art production. It matched with Pound’s enthusiasm for the Classicists and Troubadours, and he could not have given Dolmetsch’s instruments more credit when he wrote: “I perceived a sound which is undoubtedly derived from the Gods, and then I found myself in a reconstructed century -- in a century of music, back before Mozart of Purcell, listening to clear music, to tones clear as brown amber” (*New Age* Jan. 7, 1915). The subsequent article in the series is fully devoted to Vorticism, in an attempt to define it “quietly, lucidly,” and “with precision” (*New Age* Jan. 14, 1915).

This was perhaps one of the reasons why Vorticism failed to rocket from the start. Although Pound always pleaded, already in his Imagism days, to show “the critical importance of calling things by their ‘proper’ names” (Ruthven 116), he remained vague himself when it came to defining Vorticism “quietly, lucidly,” and “with precision”. Directness of utterance was always his pet notion, yet readers of the *New Age* remained puzzled no matter how many articles Pound published on his theoretical art conceptions. In the already mentioned article “Vorticism” Pound repeated that “Vorticism is the use of, or the belief in the use of, THE PRIMARY PIGMENT, straight through all of the arts” and that “Vorticism means that one is interested in the creative faculty as opposed to the mimetic. We believe that it is harder to make than to copy.”

The use of the primary pigment had already been mentioned in *BLAST* (“Vortex. Pound.” 153), and his explanation of the concept reads as follows:

We go to a particular art for something which we cannot get in any other art. If we want form and colour we go to a painting, or we make a painting. If we want form without colour and in two dimensions, we want drawing or etching. If we want form in three dimensions, we want sculpture. If we want an image or a procession of images, we want poetry. If we want pure sound, we want music. (*New Age* Jan. 14, 1915)

Especially when it came to Vorticist poetry, Pound never really expressed how it ought to be conceived. The poems he produced in *BLAST* had no specific formal features, besides the harsh content and vile message. It seems that his poetry “did not allow for the extreme abstraction and the counter-humanism practiced by Epstein, and by Lewis above all. Strictly speaking, in his poetry [Pound] was not a Vorticist” (Moody 255). According to Lewis, and maybe even the entire *BLAST* group, Pound’s “fire-eating propagandist utterances were not accompanied by any very experimental efforts in his particular medium” (qtd. in Ackroyd 37). However, in his Imagist period and the accompanying poems, Pound had given sufficient descriptions about the sense of rhythm and musicality and gave both practical examples and lucid definitions of his idea of for instance melopoeia. The reader understood that Imagist poetry is a kind of poetry “wherein the words are charged, over and above their plain meaning, with some musical property, which directs the bearing or trend of that meaning” (Bucknell 60). This is what Pound achieved in his translation of the original Anglo-Saxon text of “The Seafarer”. Through his extensive use of sounds he created the mood the original poem was supposed to exemplify. Pound alternated long vowels with short vowels to direct the dance of the words.

List how I, care-wretched, on ice-cold sea,
Weathered the winter, wretched outcast
Deprived of my kinsmen

Another theoretical aspect of his Imagist period was his aversion to the iambic pentameter. In his *ABC of Reading* he repeated his guidelines to read good poetry:

“The reader will be well advised to read according to sense and syntax, keep from thumping, observe the syntactical pause, and not stop for the line ends save where sense requires or a comma indicates. That is the way to get the most out of it, and come nearest to a sense of the time-element in the metrical plan.” (ABC 127)

Unfortunately, Pound was never this direct in his explanation of Vorticism, and while he asked readers in 1929 to “throw out all critics who use vague general terms,” (qtd. in Ruthven 120) he

himself often indulged in that. Apart from the explanation of emotion and energy we find in “In a Station of the Metro,” cited above, most explanations remained as vague as the expression that “Vorticism is a legitimate expression of life” (*New Age* Jan. 14, 1915).

Today, via various studies of experts who have analyzed Vorticist art it is possible to distinguish the movement from Futurism or Cubism, especially in painting, but it must have been very difficult to do so for Pound’s contemporaries, which is probably the reason why Vorticists were seen as Futurist copycats so often. Pound may have said that he has “at least in part explained why [he] believes in Mr. Wyndham Lewis,” why he considers him “a more significant artist than Kandinsky,” and why he thinks that Lewis’s work “will contain certain elements not to be found in Picasso,” he never gave tangible evidence for these proclamations. This same message is found in a letter to the editor published in the *New Age* one week later, signed by John Riddle. In reply to Pound’s article on Vorticism, it reads that “[i]f Mr. Pound has given us anything, he has given us a muddle,” and that although everything is consistent, it had been said before and is common knowledge of every creative artist (*New Age* Jan. 21, 1915).

Pound’s fourth article in the “Affirmations” series is entirely devoted to Imagism, but again his explanation is not clear enough since another letter to the editor follows asking for a more thorough clarification of his ideas. The Imagism article explains that “energy creates pattern” and that “emotional force gives the image.” He speaks of “pattern-units or vorticist picture” and that “emotion creates the pattern-unit and the arrangement of forms.” The Image created can be either “subjective” -- when “external causes play upon the mind” -- or “objective;” when the emotion is carried “intact to the mind; and that vortex purges it of all save the essential or dominant or dramatic qualities, and it emerges like the external original” (*New Age* Jan. 28, 1915). The least one can say is that this is all rather complex. The letter to the editor that follows, signed by Constantia Stone, asks for “more adjectives and a new definition of intense emotion” in Pound’s utterance “intense emotion causes pattern to arise in the mind.” It also asks for a definition of “intense emotion” and “under what circumstances it will be accompanied by pattern-unit” (*New Age* Feb. 4, 1915).

Imagism and Vorticism are closely connected, and while some claimed that Vorticism was merely Futurism bottled in England, it seems more valid to say that Vorticism was an upgraded version of Imagism. But why did Pound remain so vague in his explanation of Vorticism, while his explanation of Imagism in his original “Osiris” essays was quite clear? It

might have been to conceal the actual vagueness of his new movement, or to keep people's attention by raising questions of what the movement truly was about. The only thing Pound was crystal-clear about was his affirmations of his fellow artists.

He praised the sculptor Jacob Epstein, for example, by comparing his work to Rodin's. Epstein was the big shot sculptor of the movement, whom Pound had met at Hulme's evening parties. Epstein was "already notorious for his monumental Oscar Wilde tomb in Paris," and was now "bringing a new kind of art into England" (Moody 237).

Whatever may be the ultimate opinion concerning their respective genius, there can be no doubt whatsoever that the work now being done by Jacob Epstein is better than anything which is likely to be accomplished by Rodin at the age of one hundred and three. (*New Age* Jan 21, 1915)

Of Henri Gaudier-Brzeska Pound said that he was "*the* coming sculptor," "the most absolute case of genius," (qtd. in Moody 236) and Pound devoted an essay in his "Affirmations" series on him. Gaudier-Brzeska had written his personal Vortex for *BLAST*, and Pound wrote that it would "become the textbook in all academies of sculpture before our generation has passed from the earth" (*New Age* Feb. 4, 1915). Since Gaudier-Brzeska had recently gone off to the trenches, Pound concluded his appraisal essay with the message that

if the accursed Germans succeed in damaging Gaudier-Brzeska they will have done more harm to art than they have by the destruction of Rheims Cathedral, for a building once made and recorded can, with some care, be remade, but the uncreated forms of a man of genius cannot be set forth by another. (*New Age* Feb. 4, 1915)

3.1.1.5 The Influence of the War

Henri Gaudier-Brzeska was killed in a charge at Neuville St. Vaast, only four months later. It is hard to grasp fully how important Gaudier-Brzeska was not only for Vorticism but also to Pound. Together with Pound he was probably the strongest personality of the movement, and the two stimulated each other constantly. Pound's poems were influenced by Brzeska's loose way of sculpting, without starting from a model, but directly carving in the stone. This is visible in his *Cantos*, but his new looser style of poetry may have originated in his Vorticist days, when Pound had complex theoretical conceptions of his new art form, but produced little practical examples. Gaudier-Brzeska, for his part, worked out Pound's notion of emotion and energy in his sculptures. In his second Vortex (written from the trenches), which was published in the second edition of *BLAST*, he emphasized the notion of emotion, and the primary pigment.

I SHALL DERIVE MY EMOTIONS SOLELY FROM THE ARRANGEMENT OF SURFACES, I shall present my emotions by the ARRANGEMENT OF MY SURFACES, THE PLANES AND LINES BY WHICH THEY ARE DEFINED. (“Vortex Gaudier-Brzeska” 34)

The death of this young genius meant a huge loss for the Vorticist movement. Second to Pound he was the upcoming driving force behind the movement, and a lieutenant indispensable for the expansion of the movement. The only reminder Pound had was the hieratic head Brzeska had carved for Pound. In his study of the sculptor’s work Pound wrote: “He was certainly the best company in the world, and some of my best days, the happiest and most interesting, were spent in his uncomfortable mud-floored studio when he was doing my bust” (qtd. in Ackroyd 30). Pound would drag along the bust every time he changed residence. After his release from St-Elizabeth’s hospital in 1958 he returned to Italy to stay with his daughter at Brunnenburg Castle. The *Hieratic Head* was “placed so as to catch the rays of the setting sun” (qtd. in Ackroyd 104).

Marble was very expensive at the time, so Gaudier basically begged fragments everywhere he could. The piece out of which the *Hieratic Head* originated was the biggest Gaudier had ever worked on. “It weighed half a ton and Gaudier spent two months cutting at it” (Kenner 252). It was the proud Pound who had brought the giant piece of marble to Gaudier, and while sitting for the sculptor he reflected “that if he had lived in the Quattrocento he should have had ‘no finer moment and no better craftsman to fill it’” (Kenner 252). Gaudier was the apple of Pound’s eye, and “many years later, when Pound was incarcerated in an asylum, his psychiatric inquisitors were said to believe that Gaudier-Brzeska’s death had materially affected Pound’s sanity” (Ackroyd 30). The war killed everything. It even suffocated Pound’s plans for the creation of The College of Arts “which would ‘aim at an intellectual status no lower than that attained by the courts of the Italian Renaissance’. It would offer ‘contact with artists of established position, creative minds, men who for the most part have already suffered in the cause of their art’” (Moody 264). Wyndham Lewis would have been head of the *Atelier of Painting*, Pound head of the section of *Comparative Poetry*, and *Sculpture* would have been Gaudier-Brzeska’s responsibility. Unfortunately, the war killed the young sculptor, blew away the



Hieratic Head by Gaudier-Brzeska

College of Arts plan, and choked the spirit of Vorticism at a time when the movement was still in its infancy. The ingredients necessary to become more than a bunch of failed Futurist epigones, were there, but the moment was a bad one. Ackroyd writes that “Vorticism did have a real significance in Pound’s England,” (39) in an attempt to “harness the energies of the most interesting pre-War artists in an enterprising and serious way” (40). And although the “enterprise failed,” the movement still “haunts our own era; it represented at least the possibility of radical cultural change in England -- although that promise was never in fact fulfilled (Ackroyd 40). Both Pound’s “Imagiste movement” and “the Vorticist movement” were “swept away in the general mobilization for war” (Moody 258).

The influence of the war was perceptible in the second and last issue of *BLAST*. The “[w]ar Number” was “thinner and tamer than the first *Blast*” and “Pound’s contribution was limited to several poems and a brief commentary entitled ‘Chronicles’” (Wees 1965: 65). Gaudier had already died out of the trenches when it appeared in July 1915, and Lewis was preparing to go into the army. “Only Pound tried to keep Vorticism going” (Wees 1965: 65). Besides, London was not waiting for another edition of *BLAST*, and Pound could not do it on his own. The new copy, “puce, the size of a telephone directory lettered from corner to corner, lay on an aristocratic garden table. The summer day darkened. The rains commenced to fall. No one rescued it” (Kenner 246). *BLAST* was dead, but Vorticism was still floundering. Pound did everything he could to keep Vorticism “before the public” (Wees 1965: 65). The “Affirmations” discussed above were not his only contributions to magazines discussing the movement. He wrote articles about the movement and had them published in the *Egoist* and the *Fortnightly Review*, but his greatest contribution, according to Wees, was Pound’s *Gaudier-Brzeska: A Memoir*,

published in 1916 by John Lane, which brought together photographs of Gaudier’s sculpture, reproductions of his drawing, and reprints of his published writings along with some of his letters written from the front and Pound’s somewhat rambling text, composed of previously published essays and some new comments on Gaudier and art in general. (66)

In the following years Pound would keep promoting Vorticist work. He unsuccessfully tried to bring a book about Lewis on the market, but coerced John Quinn into buying any Vorticist work that was available.

4 The Vorticist Aftermath

With Lewis, Hulme and Ford Madox Ford gone to war, and Gaudier-Brzeska dead, Pound stood alone again. Vorticism had estranged the poet socially and culturally from the literary center in London. Only few stood up for him, like Aldington at a dinner given by Harold Monroe when he countered Pound haters by saying that “Ezra Pound has more vitality in his little finger than the lot of you put together” (qtd. in Ackroyd 40). No matter what, Pound was an outsider again, but he would continue what he was best at, promoting fellow artists. In fact, he had never stopped assisting fellow artists, and always kept an eye out for upcoming talent. While he was busy with the publication of *BLAST* no. 1, for instance, he convinced Monroe to publish “Calle Memo O Loredan” by Douglas Goldring in *Poetry*. He wrote a letter to Goldring with the promise that he would “get paid in a day or so” and told him that he would do his very best to get anything worthwhile published (*Letters* 79). In April, Pound had sent Monroe a poem by a befriended poet who remains anonymous. In the accompanying letter Pound wrote that the poet’s “wife and infant are I believe starving or thereabouts,” and asked Monroe a cheque for the poem, before it was even published (*Letters* 75).

In September 1914, T.S. Eliot had arrived in London and went to visit “his more illustrious contemporary” (Ackroyd 44). Already one week after their first encounter, Pound received a poem by Eliot. With his fine nose Pound immediately recognized the merit of the work. He considered Eliot to be his discovery, and wrote to Harriet Monroe that he was “jolly well right about Eliot.” “He has sent in the best poem I have yet had or seen from an American. PRAY GOD IT BE NOT A SINGLE AND UNIQUE SUCCESS. He has taken it back to get it ready for the press and you shall have it in a few days” (*Letters* 80). Pound sent Monroe the poem in October, and told her he hoped she would “get it *in* soon” (*Letters* 81). The now famous poem, “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock,” was printed in June 1915. However, it appears that Eliot was not very enthusiastic about his own writing at the time, and it took all of Pound’s persuasion for Eliot to look at himself as a serious writer. Pound was able to lift Eliot “out of his lunar alley-ways and fin-de-siècle nocturnes into a massive region of verbal creation in contact with that astonishing didactic intelligence” (qtd. in Ackroyd 44).

In 1915, while Pound was still assisting Eliot, he also acted as the “unpaid literary agent” for James Joyce (Ackroyd 44). *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* had been serialized in little magazines, thanks to Pound, but it had not yet been published as a novel. Again John Quinn

was called upon, to find money and publishers for Joyce in America (Ackroyd 44). In the following year, 1916, Quinn would buy several works of Lewis and Gaudier-Brzeska at the insistence of Pound. The poet was still devoted to Vorticism and tried his very best to manage and sell their works. After the death of Gaudier-Brzeska, for instance, “he fell heir to the ‘debris of Gaudier’s studio,’ which included sculpture, sketches, paintings and pastels”. Lewis had turned over his works to Pound before he joined the army in March 1916 (Wees 1965: 66), and Pound serialized Lewis’s novel *Tarr* in the *Egoist*, but was unable to publish it in its entirety.

Nevertheless, no matter how hard Pound tried to help his friends, his role of literary critic and promoter was diminishing, and it was no longer his sole and primary occupation. He had found the time to work on a new volume of poems of himself, *Lustra*, and worked hard on the Ernest Fenollosa notes that would result in *Cathay*. The work that would turn into his magnum opus, the *Cantos*, also developed. In an interview with Donald Hall, published in 1962, Pound said, “I began the *Cantos* about 1904, I suppose. I had various schemes, starting in 1904 or 1905. The problem was to get a form -- something elastic enough to take the necessary material” (*Paris Review* Summer-Fall 1962). By December 1915 Pound had found the desired form, and the first *Three Cantos* were finished (Ackroyd 46).

In 1916 Pound’s isolation grew further. Joyce had moved to Paris and Lewis was still at the front. The highlight of the year was the publication of Gaudier’s *Memoir*, mentioned above, but Pound was now facing difficulties publishing his own work. Elkin Mathews, who had been more than happy to publish Pound’s work in the past¹⁶, found *Lustra* in parts “too obscene” (Ackroyd 48). Iris Barry noted that in 1916 Pound’s name “stood in England, along with that of the sculptor Epstein, for all that was dangerously different, horridly new” (qtd. in Ackroyd 48). But Pound kept fighting, if not for himself, for his fellow Vorticists. He brought together “a collection of Vorticist works” and shipped it to New York with Quinn’s money. “A Vorticist exhibition, including work by Lewis, Gaudier, Wadsworth, Etchells, and Roberts, was held at the Penguin Club in New York during the winter of 1916-1917” (Wees 1965: 66). That was one of the last death spasms of Vorticism. Pound had written to Quinn in September 1916 that he no longer felt “responsible for the welfare or upkeep of Joyce or Lewis” (Moody 284). Eliot could manage himself, so Pound saw the road clear to focus on his own position and writing again. Joyce was an odd character, who did not always appreciate the effort Pound put in his career. It

¹⁶ Mathews had published *Personae* in 1909 and distributed copies of *A Quinzaine for This Yule* in 1910.

seemed that Joyce only cared “for his own genius” (Moody 283). After four years of propaganda, in which Pound had never taken any of “Quinn’s money for himself,” or taken commission “from either Quinn or the Vorticists on the sales in which he had played an agent’s part,” he decided to quit (Moody 284). The result of his insatiable drive to help others was that he was now facing problems paying the rent and was in debt to his wife Dorothy.

4.1.1.1 Farewell to England

Pound became a foreign editor again in March 1917, this time for the American magazine the *Little Review* that published Eliot, Williams, Yeats and Joyce. And although he had recently decided to focus more on his own role than that of others, he stayed active as a promoter. He immediately wrote to Margaret Anderson, the American editor of the magazine, that he desired “a place where I and T.S. Eliot can appear once a month ... and where Joyce can appear when he likes, and where Wyndham Lewis can appear if he comes back from the War” (qtd. in Ackroyd 50). Pound kept reviewing Joyce’s work, and finally managed to get *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* published into book form. *Ulysses* was serialized in the *Little Review* in 1918, and Pound published Eliot’s work in *Poetry* and the *Egoist* (Ackroyd 50). The revival, however, was of short duration. The disenchantment with the London culture was reaching a climax, and when Richard Aldington returned from the war he also observed that “appreciation of Ezra’s work had diminished to a pinprick” (qtd. in Ackroyd 53).

The Vortex had ended with the second issue of *BLAST*, but it took until 1919 “before Pound fully realized this bitter fact” (Kenner 247). When Lewis returned from the war he did not seem enthusiastic about an attempt to revive the movement, and Pound would not try it alone. In 1918 Pound had written two noteworthy poem, “Langue d’Oc” and “Homage to Sextus Propertius”. The latter had come out in 1919, but was received poorly. The poem consists of twelve sections but *Poetry* would only print four of them in its March edition. The poem can be seen as a final attempt to unite tradition and modernism, it is a “selection of poems and fragments from the four books of Sextus Propertius, rearranged and transposed to create a new work, and a new kind of poetry” (Moody 350). It could not have come as a surprise to Pound when again his poetry was misunderstood. Few readers looked into the poem and saw their own society. “Its relation to modern life [was] ignored while debate raged about its relation to Propertius’ Latin” (Moody 352). Even Harriet Monroe conceived it as a translation, and insulted

Pound's intelligence when she sent the poem to Professor Hale of the University of Chicago for correction. His findings were that "Mr Pound is incredibly ignorant of Latin" (qtd. in Moody 353). Pound replied with "Cat-piss and porcupines!! The thing is no more a translation than my 'Altaforte' is a translation, or than Fitzgerald's Omar is a translation." He concluded his letter with "in final commiseration" (qtd. in Moody 354). Harriet Monroe let him know six months later that she took that "as a resignation from the staff of *Poetry*" (qtd. in Moody 354).

The poem that followed the year after, "Hugh Selwyn Mauberley", was Pound's farewell to London. Over the years the poem has been read in dozens of different ways. Leavis, for instance, read it as a "quintessential autobiography," a "devoted life summed up in futility" (qtd. in Bush 60). Kenner, on the other hand, argued that Mauberley was "a parody of Pound the poet with whom Pound is anxious not to be confounded" (qtd. in Bush 61). Indeed, Pound was revolted by interpretations such as Leavis's and wrote to his old professor, Felix E. Schelling, that he is "no more Mauberley that Eliot is Prufrock" (*Letters* 180).

I will not go into an analysis of this poem, but focus on the context in which it appeared. According to Eliot, "Pound was hard up for money but London no longer offered an organ of any importance in which Pound could express himself and Pound was becoming forgotten (qtd. in Bush 63). Bush writes that "Pound was deeply depressed, not least because of the hostile reception of 'Homage to Sextus Propertius'" and that Pound was "disturbed that his critics did not see its relevance to contemporary England, for he was feeling sensitive to criticism that he was concerned only with the past" (Bush 63). I will not treat the poem as an autobiography nor connect the persona in the poem with Pound, but I cannot help to link some elements of the poem to his period in London. In the first part, "E. P. Ode pour l'élection de son sepulcher", there are striking similarities. The first lines read "For three years, out of key with his time, / He strove to resuscitate the dead art / Of poetry; to maintain 'the sublime' / In the old sense." In my discussion of Pound's period in London between 1908 and 1920, the volumes of poems published in the first three years (e.g. *Canzoni* or *Personae*) can be seen as an attempt to "resuscitate the dead art". The poem continues with "Wrong from the start -- / No, hardly, but seeing he had been born / In a half savage country, out of date." The poetry of his early London period was also conceived as outmoded and as I mentioned above, Rainey referred to the poet as "a living archaism" (199). Pound's poetry evolved, but he constantly stumbled upon Victorian

and Edwardian barriers. Bush writes that Pound was “forced to think of art as institutional practice and to admit his complicity in the corrupt set of institutions” he saw around him (66).

In *Mauberley*, we discover what happens when the liberating gods and goddesses of the imagination are violated on the one hand by a culture hardened against revelation and on the other by an artistic vanguard that has come to value the forms of art over art’s erotic power. (Bush 66)

The viewpoint Bush presents here can be compared to another of Pound’s poems which is nowadays considered to be one of his best, “The Return”. It was published in one of Pound’s earlier volumes of poetry, *Ripostes*, in 1912. Cambridge denominates the poem “a harbinger of the hard modernist style which renounced Yeatsian romance and revolutionized English verse for generations to come” (242), and Eliot said of the poem that it is “an important study in verse which is really quantitative” (12).

I will analyze this poem briefly, because I believe that it clearly shows Pound’s strong spirit and will to alter the established poetics of his time, and therefore fits into this sociological literary discussion. The difference between the two poems is not so much in style and cadence, as it is in tone. In “The Return” the persona fights and defeats the established gods that would defeat the liberating god Mauberley eight years later. The way Pound plays around with past and present tense is key in any attempt to understand “The Return”. Kenner points at the contrast between how the gods were and how they are when returning in the poem. While in the opening lines, written in the present tense, the meters are “unstable”, there was regularity before the gods returned. The third stanza is printed here:

Góds of the / wínged / shóe !
Wíth them the / sílver / hóunds,
sníffing the / tráce of / áir !

Kenner states that the section of the poem dominated by this figure “is characterized by verbs in the past tense: here is how it was, this is how they once were.” This is history now. The gods have been knocked of their pedestal. When they return, they return without “sharp meters or sharp images” (Kenner 190). Pound’s craftsmanship is exquisite in this poem. He manages to incorporate all kinds of historical devices in only twenty-one lines, while at the same time conveying the message all his manifestoes stand for. The first two stanzas in “The Return” react against the third and the fourth. They have been liberated from technical constraints. The last two lines, then, constitute a stunning conclusion to this magnificent poem.

Slow on the leash,
pallid the leash-men !

The rhythm changes again, slowing down the pace, to create the perfect ending. This termination, Kenner writes, “draws pallor and slowness into sculptured stasis” (190). The most important lines of the entire poem, however, are the first. Nothing more than “SEE, they return” is needed to create the image. “They” is further specified by “the keen-scented” and “souls of blood”. In this respect, Kenner once again refers to Pound’s “Imagist propaganda”, which is a common denominator in Pound’s career. He printed his Imagist ideas in the first issue of *BLAST*, in the *New Age* under the header “Affirmations” and in “the ABC of Reading”. The basic thought is that “every concept, every emotion presents itself to the vivid consciousness in some primary form” (“Vortex. Pound.” 154).

The image of the humbled gods is printed on the reader’s retina. The gods returning strong would impede Pound’s movement. Their manifestation would “obliterate every formality (modern subjectivity, modern poetry, modern culture).” Pound makes us see, asks us to see, that “the gods are rhythmic icons and similes – rhetorical figures, not the figures of the gods themselves” (Leland 185). The transition from gods to dogs is crucial in this respect. The transition begins already in the second line, where we find a spondaic foot, and where we see only the “feet of the gods”. The reader has to construct a significant whole on the basis of relatively few elements. It is as if Pound personifies a synecdoche. We see their wings, their “winged shoe!”, where the reference to the feet returns. We see the dogs, moving at the gods’ feet, the “silver hounds”. Leland calls this a “metonymic chain”, where via each link a chain is formed beginning with the gods’ feet and the metrical feet, to finally the hounds. The gods undergo “a kind of chiastic metamorphosis and appear as the more easily visualized dogs” (Leland 186). The established metrical structures, however, personified by the dogs and empowered by the gods, have lost their vividness. “These were the souls of blood.”

Eight years later, however, it would appear that the gods in “The Return” lost a battle, but that they would finally win the war from the gods of revelation in “Hugh Selwyn Mauberley”. In a letter Pound wrote to Schelling in 1922 he explained that “throwing the baby of ‘revelation’ out with the bath-water of Victorian poetry’s weakness for moralistic ‘patent medicine’ had ‘led to the errors of aesthete’s critique” (qtd. in Bush 66). The difference between the two poems is that “The Return” is a poem by an adolescent poet, it radiates strength and the will to fight the

establishment, while “Hugh Selwyn Mauberley”, is the poem of a fallen man in crisis who has lost the force to fight.

In 1919 Pound would write “The Death of Vorticism” and it was published in the *Little Review*. In spite of what the title might lead one to think, however, the poet still did not acknowledge the death of his movement. As proof for the liveliness of the group he mentioned the “memorial exhibition of Gaudier’s work, which had been held at the Leicester Gallery in May and June 1918” and the “war paintings of Lewis and Roberts” (Wees 1965: 67). The name of Gaudier’s exhibition, however, said it all, memorial, a commemorative of something that had been, but is no longer. Moreover, the paintings of Roberts and Lewis were war paintings indeed, but they were not Vorticist paintings. The Great English Vortex had collapsed, and so had the movement. Pound would leave for France in December 1920, hoping to find a new vortex in Paris, and a fresh start. After twelve years of “activity and controversy” in London, there was very little left to say. The long-standing gods had won, Paris called, and Pound moved on.

5 Conclusions

I set out to discover how Pound entered the literary field in London, how highly his persona and writings were esteemed, and which strategies he followed to obtain his goal; becoming a flawless and respected artist. I have shown how Pound, sometimes with slyness strategies and glorifying semblance, quickly gained respect in London literary circles. He arrived in a city where reputation was everything, and soon realized that being a respected name could do more for an artist's career than the merit of his writings. From day one onwards, his utterances were continuously controversial, but Pound still managed to make the appropriate and important friendships. He carefully completed the required steps -- as described in *The Field of Cultural Production* -- to become a legitimate player in the established field. There is no doubt that he succeeded since he was an acknowledged member of several respected literary clubs such as the Poet's Club and the Square Club, and he even received patronage. In those first years economic capital was more important than symbolic, which also showed in his conservative poetry. However, it was not conservatism that ran in Pound's blood, but controversialism. He changed his course in 1912 and put to sea his own poetics. Imagism was born, and it constituted Pound's first steps away from the establishment. Although Pound initiated the movement, he was disappointed in the spirit of his fellow Imagists, and soon moved on. The poet then radicalized his strategy and poetic ideas, which were crystal-clear in his head but would remain vague for almost every other reader of his time. On the eve of World War One, Pound's ship suddenly found itself in a vortex. He met those people -- like Lewis, Gaudier-Brzeska and Epstein -- he had been waiting for all his life, and continued to modernize his poetry. By 1913 he had greatly matured in person as well as in writing. Masterpieces such as "In a Station of the Metro" or "The Return" show that Pound, before the age of thirty, had become a flawless artist in words.

He then found himself on the edge of the field of literary production, a financially difficult but artistically appropriate position. He was loud, outspoken, dandyish, and in constant quarrel with society. Pound would not be Pound if he did not question morality and established norms, and indefatigable he fought his battles in the *New Age*, the magazine that had boosted his career, and at the same time tried to bring the poet down. The Vorticists, however, never doubted his genius. Lewis and Gaudier-Brzeska were his closest associates, and together they resisted the Futurist march and the conservative literary statues.

Pound did everything right to achieve his goal, but was misunderstood time after time. Moreover, the First World War had either killed his like-minded friends or driven them away from London, so Pound was entirely on his own. He was not going to give up, and in an attempt to be tacit he wrote more articles to boost Vorticism and the participating artists. The means were there, but the timing was bad. John Quinn supported the movement financially, and the Vorticist artists supported Pound. Sadly, however, art's merits could not overcome the Great War's horrific consequences. "The War to End All Wars" silenced the upcoming literary war in London. Although Vorticism would always be controversial, it never generated enough respect or even its just position in the field of literary production. Pound haters were pleased to see the poet's spirit break, even though he had always merely wanted to give rise to a new kind of art. Literariness may have been of key importance within the Vorticist group, reputation was still the key to success in the wider literary circle.

Pound had successfully entered that circle years before, he was successful in his evolution from established poetry to renewing modernist poetry, but he failed miserably at being loved and understood. For that, only the reluctant society could be blamed. It did not accept the artist to be "highly antagonistic, highly eccentric" nor a writer who expected the whole world to revolve around him. Society did not understand "the Vorticist gospel that required querulousness as a style of life and insult as a lifelong duty" (Schneideau 227). It could not distinguish Pound as an artist from Pound as a human being, and it severely attacked the two entities at the same time, until the man collapsed. In 1913 Pound wrote that "the impulse is with the Gods" (*T.P.'s Weekly* 6 Jun. 1913), clearly unaware of the different gods that held sway in London. Pound's personal gods may have created the impulse of the Vortex; but the other, more powerful deities reduced it to a breeze.

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